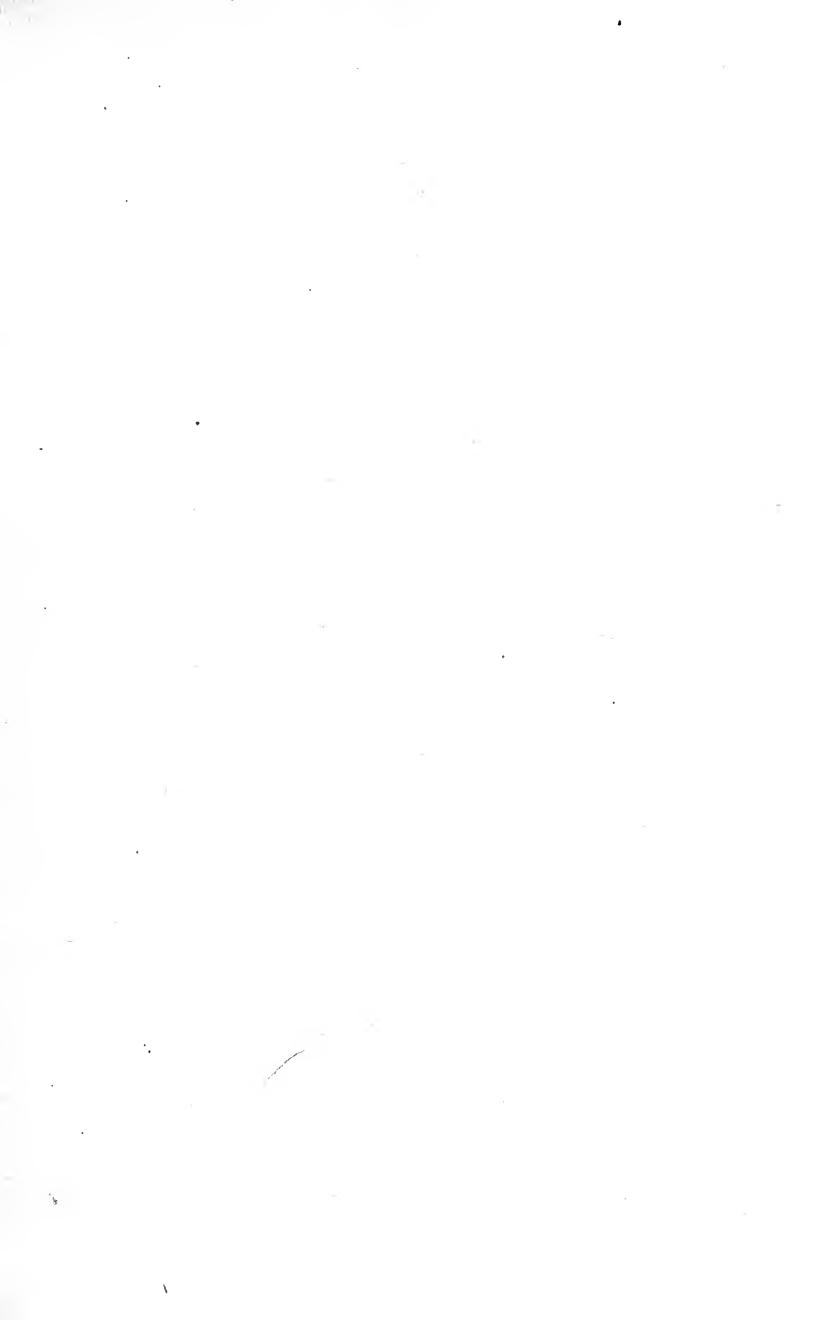
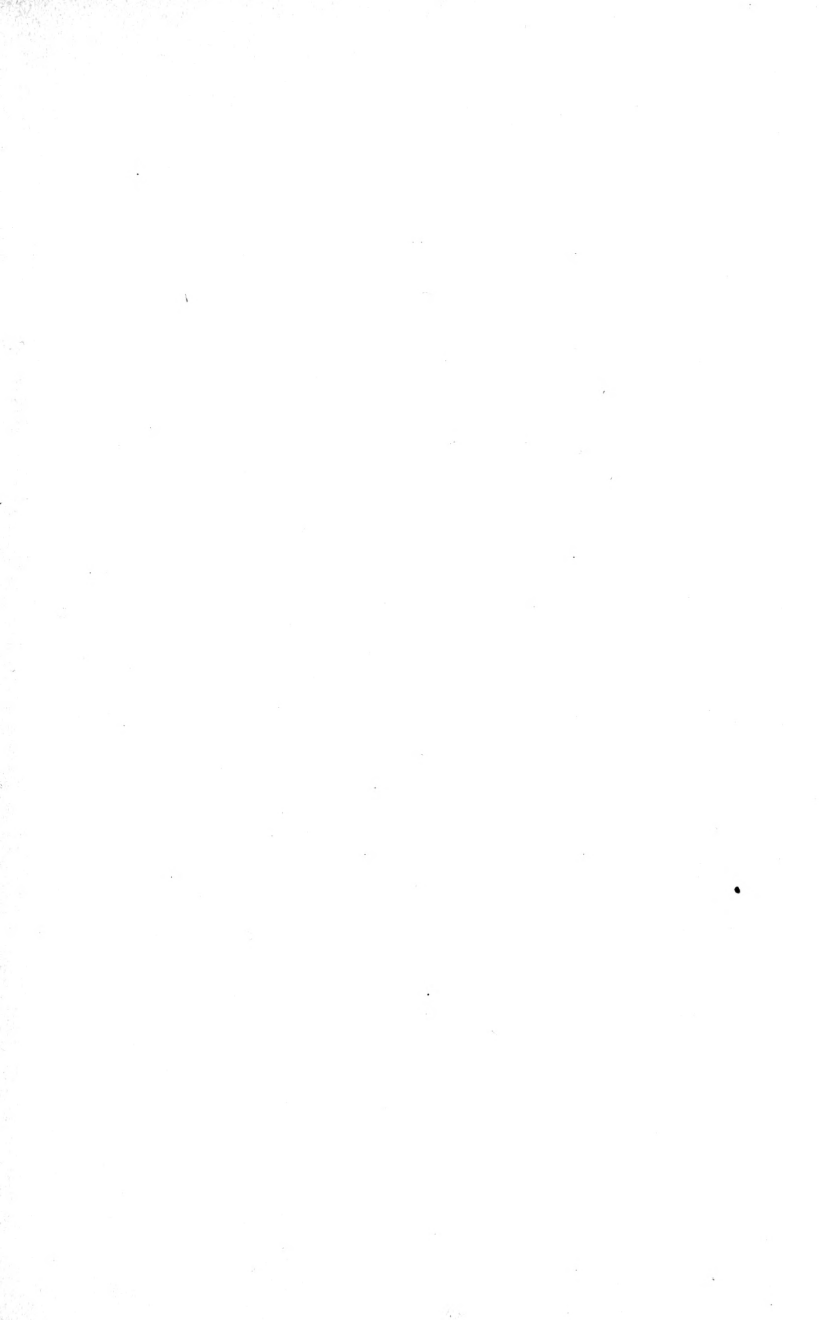


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AN  
INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN  
EXPOSITION

BY

FRANCES M. PERRY

INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH IN WELLESLEY COLLEGE



NEW YORK  
CHICAGO

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## PREFACE

EXPOSITION is admitted to be the most generally used form of discourse, and further, to be that form of discourse whose successful practice requires no special aptitude, as do description and narration. Moreover, the writing of exposition has been found to be largely conducive to the development of keen observation, deliberation, sound critical judgment, and clear and concise expression. For these reasons it has an assured place in every high school or college composition course.

In practice, expository courses often fail to justify the prevailing estimate of the value of exposition, not because exposition has been too highly estimated, but because the subject has been presented in an unsystematized manner without variety or movement. A class begins a course in exposition, writing three-page themes on *My Favorite Sport* and *Friendship*, and five months later its members are writing eight-page themes on *My Favorite Sport* and *Friendship*. The advancement of individual members of the class is even less appreciable than that of the class as a whole. They have only an empirical knowledge of what exposition is. One remembers that when the

instructor was presenting the subject he read as an example of exposition, a paper on *How to Play Basket Ball*; accordingly he ventures to write a theme on *How to Play Tennis*. That is successful, and the subject of his next theme becomes *How to Catch Black Bass*; this is followed by *How to Sail a Boat*, *How to Break a Colt*, etc. Another student remembers a model bit of exposition about *Gray Squirrels*; he tries in turn, *Butterflies*, *Dogs*, *Horses*, *Trees*, *Orchids*, etc. Another remembers that the instructor suggested the *Fourth of July* as a subject for an exposition, and writes a series of holiday themes: *Thanksgiving Day*, *Christmas*, *New Year's Day*, *St. Valentine's Day*, etc., are the subjects of his successive themes. Still another has grasped the idea that literary criticism is exposition and all of his "expository themes" are summaries of novels. Something like this is pretty sure to happen in a large class where the work is not carefully organized.

My purpose in preparing this text-book is to provide a systematized course in the theory and practice of expository writing. In the first place, the student who follows this course should have a clear understanding of exposition — its nature, its two processes, definition and analysis; its three functions, impersonal presentation or transcript, interpretation, and interpretative presentation; and the special application of exposition in literary criticism. In the second place, he should have gained through the practice in composition required by the course, facility in



writing in a clear and interesting way the various types of exposition.

The section on literary criticism may seem unnecessary to the completeness of the course, but it is demanded by the widespread interest in that phase of the subject and by the general need of progressive work in literary criticism in place of the fatuous repetition of summaries of stories that a course in literary criticism is apt to degenerate into unless the students are carefully directed.

The method used is direct exposition amply reënforced by examples and exercises. The illustrative matter is taken from many and varied sources, but much of it is necessarily modern, since our standard essayists, when examined carefully with a view to their availability as models of expository style, are surprisingly often found to be quaint or mannered.

The book is intended to serve as a thorough introduction to the subject of exposition. It calls for thoughtful, earnest work, but, it is hoped, will reward effort with pleasure as well as with substantial gain. It is suited to the need of students in the final years of secondary schools or the first years of college.

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F. M. P.



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# THE NATURE OF EXPOSITION



## THE NATURE OF EXPOSITION

OF the four forms of discourse usually recognized by rhetoricians, — narration, description, exposition, and argumentation, — exposition is possibly the most familiar to all of us. The text-books in our schools, the sermons in our churches, the editorials in our newspapers, the essays in our magazines, are expository. Yet few of us could tell just what is meant by exposition. The common impulse would be to say exposition is not description, narration, or argumentation. But this negative definition is not enough; we must know what is the field, the purpose, the method, of exposition. Some of the distinctions given in the rhetorics do not greatly help us to do this.

We are told that exposition differs from description and narration in the subject-matter with which it deals; that exposition deals with a class of objects or events, while description and narration deal with individual objects and events. But a little consideration makes us question this. Take, for example, William J. Long's description of the moose in *School of the Woods*: —

“Umquenawis, the mighty, is lord of the woodland . . . so he fears nothing, moving through the big woods like a

master ; and when you see him for the first time in the wilderness pushing his stately, silent way among giant trees or plunging like a great engine through underbrush and over windfalls, his nose up to try the wind, his broad antlers far back on his mighty shoulders, while the dead tree that opposes him cracks and crashes down before his rush, and the alders beat a rattling, snapping tattoo on his branching horns, — when you see him thus, something within you rises up like a soldier at salute and says, ‘ milord the moose ! ’ ”

This passage is indubitably descriptive, picture-making, though it is the type rather than an individual that is presented. The following treatment of an individual breakfast plate by John Ruskin is, on the other hand, as undeniably exposition : —

“ I have here in my hand one of the simplest possible examples of the union of the graphic and constructive powers, — one of my breakfast plates. Since all the finely architectural arts, we said, began in the shaping of the cup and the platter, we will begin, ourselves, with the platter.

“ Why has it been made round ? For two structural reasons : first, that the greatest holding surface may be gathered into the smallest space ; and secondly, that in being pushed past other things on the table, it may come into least contact with them.

“ Next, why has it a rim ? For two other structural reasons : first, that it is convenient to put salt or mustard upon ; but secondly and chiefly, that the plate may be easily laid hold of. The rim is the simplest form of continuous handle.

“ Further, to keep it from soiling the cloth, it will be wise to put this ridge beneath, round the bottom ; for as the rim



is the simplest possible form of continuous handle, so this is the simplest form of continuous leg. . . .

"Thus far our art has been strictly utilitarian, having respect to conditions of collision, of carriage, and of support. But now on the surface of our piece of pottery, here are various bands and spots of color which are presumably set there to make it pleasanter to the eye. Six of the spots seen closely, you discover are intended to represent flowers. These then have as distinctly a graphic purpose as the other properties of the plate have an architectural one, and the first critical question we have to ask of them, is whether they are like roses or not. . . . In any case, however, that graphic power must have been subordinate to their effect as pink spots, while the band of green-blue round the plate's edge, and the spots of gold, pretend to no graphic power at all, but are meaningless spaces of color or metal, etc., etc."

It is clear that the general class, the type, may be presented as an individual and that the individual may be made to serve as a type. Further, the characterization or interpretation of a particular person or object is exposition. Indeed, an individual object or event may be made the subject of any of the four forms of discourse.

Again, the idea prevails that the distinction lies in the abstractness of the terms: that if the subject is presented in general terms, the resulting composition is exposition, while if the terms are concrete, specific, the composition must be description or narration. Here are two accounts of the creation of the world,

whose study may throw some light on this view. The first is from *Genesis*, the second from Browning's *Caliban*, where a savage man is supposed to give his views about creation : —

“ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void ; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light : and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good : and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament : and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear : and it was so. And God called the dry land *Earth* ; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas : and God saw that *it was* good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth : and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind : and God saw that *it was* good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said, Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night ;

and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and years : And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth : and it was so. And God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : *he made* the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness : and God saw that *it was* good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and the fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

Abstract words prevail here. Let us see how the savage thinking on the same subject is made to express himself :—

"Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos !

'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,  
But not the stars ; the stars came otherwise ;  
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that :  
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,  
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease :  
He hated that He cannot change His cold,

\* \* \* \* \*

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,  
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.  
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech ;  
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,

That floats and feeds ; a certain badger brown  
 He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye  
 By moonlight ; and the pie with the long tongue  
 That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,  
 And says a plain word when she finds her prize,  
 But will not eat the ants ; the ants themselves  
 That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks  
 About their hole — He made all these and more,  
 Made all we see, and us, in spite : how else ?”

— ROBERT BROWNING : *Caliban upon Setebos*.

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Notice that while the biblical account brings the process, the motives, the objects of creation, before the reader in abstract terms, and the savage is represented as thinking in concrete images, giving line, color, temperature, definite action to the objects created, the second account is essentially exposition as well as the first. The first names classes of objects created; the second describes individual objects created, as well. The going more into detail, the use of description as a means of exposition, does not change the nature of the discourse.

In truth, the distinction between exposition and the other forms of discourse is not clear-cut. Exposition is at one time tributary to description, narration, or argumentation, and again makes them tributary to itself. It is needed to make clear the point at issue in a debate ; and appearance and action usually call for some interpretation by the author or the characters

of a story or drama (the most frequently quoted passages from Shakespeare, Jaques' reflections on the seven ages of man, Hamlet's soliloquy, Portia's plea for mercy, and so on, are exposition). At the same time exposition may proceed by means of the other forms of discourse: it may make use of description, presenting the sensible attributes of an object; of narration, recording action; or of argument, employing evidence. Still, however much exposition may subserve the purpose of debate or description, it is no less exposition, and however much description and narration may subserve the purpose of exposition, they are none the less description and narration.

The confusion arises largely from the fact that we classify discourse on different bases. If we take purpose as the basis of division, we may include under exposition much that classified by method would belong in another category. The purpose of exposition is to make an idea clear to the understanding. An anecdote intended to point a moral, to teach a lesson, a description designed not merely to give a graphic delineation, but to make one see in order that he may understand, may, judged by purpose, be counted as exposition. The selfsame words may be classified in different ways according to their evident intent. If I say, *the tall, broad-shouldered boy under the tree, near the stone wall*, with the purpose of giving an idea of the appearance of the boy and his set-

ting or background, I may not call this bit of discourse exposition ; by intention and method it is descriptive ; but if I use the words restrictively, giving the particulars in order to indicate which of several boys in a field I have reference to, my words are expository in purpose.

While in the broadest sense exposition includes discourse that makes an idea clear to the understanding by graphic portrayal of sensible attributes (the descriptive method), by record of events (the narrative method), by an array of evidence (the argumentative method), in its narrower sense it indicates such discourse as makes an idea clear to the understanding by means of definition and analysis.

### EXERCISES

I. Examine the two following paragraphs. Which furnishes material for a picture, which for a map or chart? Which is addressed to the senses, which to the understanding? What form of discourse is each paragraph?

"Flinty Point on his right was sometimes in purple shadow and sometimes shining in the sun ; Needle Point on his left was sometimes in purple shadow and sometimes shining in the sun ; and beyond these headlands spread now the wide purple and now the wide sparkle of the open sea. The very gulls, wheeling as close to him as they dared, seemed to be frightened at the little boy's peril."

"One corner, as already mentioned, was called Flinty Point, the other Needle Point, and between these two points there was no gangway within the semicircle up the wall of cliff. Indeed, within the cove the cliff was perpendicular, or rather overhanging, as far as such crumbling earth would admit of its overhanging. To reach a gangway, a person inside the cove would have to leave the cliff wall for the open sands, and pass round either Needle Point or Flinty Point. Hence the cove was sometimes called Mousetrap Cove, because when the tide reached so high as to touch these two points, a person on the sands within the cove was caught as in a mousetrap, and the only means of extrication was by boat from the sea." — THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON: *Aylwin*.

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2. Tell to what form of discourse each of the following passages belongs and give reason for your classification :—

"The statuette, in bronze, something more than two feet high, represented a naked youth drinking from a gourd. The attitude was perfectly simple. The lad was squarely planted on his feet, with his legs a little apart; his back was slightly hollowed, his head thrown back; his hands were raised to support the rustic cup. There was a loosened fillet of wild flowers about his head, and his eyes, under their dropped lids, looked straight into the cup. On the base was scratched the Greek word  $\Delta\upsilon\sigma\alpha$ , *Thirst*."

"Does he represent an idea? Is he a symbol?"

"Hudson raised his eyebrows and gently stroked his hair, 'Why he's youth, you know; he's innocence, he's health, he's strength, he's curiosity. Yes, he's a good many things.'

"And is the cup also a symbol?"

“‘The cup is knowledge, pleasure, experience, anything of that kind!’” — HENRY JAMES: *Roderick Hudson*.

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3. Are the details in the following passage given to make clear a situation or to give a sense impression?

“At length the sudden clang is waked, on all their echoing shields. Each takes his hill, by night; at intervals, they darkly stand. Unequal bursts the hum of songs, between the roaring wind.

“Broad over them rose the moon!” — MACPHERSON: *Ossian*.

4. Does the following paragraph depict? What else does it accomplish? What is its primary purpose? Its method?

“We usually have one or two trackhounds at the ranch; true Southern deerhounds, black and tan, with lop ears and hanging lips, their wrinkled faces stamped with an expression of almost ludicrous melancholy. They are not fast, and have none of the alert look of the pied and spotted modern foxhound; but their noses are very keen, their voices deep and mellow, and they are wonderfully staunch on a trail.” — ROOSEVELT: *Wilderness Hunter*.

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5. On what grounds would some rhetoricians classify the following paragraph as pure exposition? (See page 13.) How do you classify it? Why?

“In the early June mornings, when the light begins to flush along the tops of the eastern hills, there is a charm, a pleasure, a beauty in the feeling of cool air that fills the upper valleys; in the pale mists that float along the hillsides; in the moist currents that move above the lowland meadows,



blurring with invisible fingers the tall weeds and bushes, silvering over the foliage of the willows and poplars, and dripping dew into the cups of a thousand flowers. It was this early hour that Corot loved best — the hour when he saw the beauty of the morning gleaming through a silver veil, and caught upon canvas the vision as it passed. At noon the mists and dews have gone, the trees stand motionless in the hot sun, casting heavy yet luminous shadows, butterflies of many hues waver about the nodding grass, and bees drone idly along from flower to flower. A warm air appears to rise from the earth, gathering around the maples on the walk, and occasionally lifting with its faint breath a single leaf. It hangs above the earth in waves of stillness like an enchanter's spell, touching into immobility all war-ring elements of nature, and hushing for a time the contentions of men. This is the hour often chosen by those painters of nature's brilliancy, Fortuny, De Nittis, Rico, and William M. Chase. And then comes twilight, when the trees stand up like silhouettes against the yellow sky, and the shadows come creeping down into the foreground. The pond is a motionless mirror of the sky; the reeds and bushes are dull spots of brown and green; the air moves hither and thither in faint gray waves, pushing about little patches of mist already risen, imbuing all things with its spirit, and tingeing all things with its hue. This was the hour of Daubigny — the hour and the effect he so often depicted in his silver and golden landscapes along the banks of the Seine and the Marne." — JOHN C. VAN DYKE: *Art for Art's Sake*.

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6. Is narration or exposition the primary purpose of the following paragraph? Why?

“Just here must be told the story of one little wasp whose individuality stands out in our minds more distinctly than that of any others. We remember her as the most fastidious and perfect little worker of the whole season, so nice was she in her adaptation of means to ends, so busy and contented in her labor of love, and so pretty in her pride over the completed work. In filling up her nest she put her head down into it and bit away the loose earth from the sides, letting it fall to the bottom of the burrow, and then, after a quantity had accumulated, jammed it down with her head. Earth was then brought from the outside and pressed in, and then more was bitten from the sides. When at last the filling was level with the ground, she brought a quantity of fine grains of dirt to the spot, and picking up a small pebble in her mandibles, used it as a hammer in pounding them down with rapid strokes, thus making this spot as hard and firm as the surrounding surface. Before we could recover from our astonishment at this performance, she had dropped her stone and was bringing more earth. We then threw ourselves down on the ground that not a motion might be lost, and in a moment we saw her pick up the pebble and again pound the earth into place with it, hammering now here and now there until all was level. . . . We are claiming a great deal for *Ammophila* when we say that she improvised a tool and made intelligent use of it, for such actions are rare even among the higher animals.”

— PECKHAM: *Wasps*.

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7. In explaining in what sense the farmhouse parlor may be said to be beset with flowers, what method does Mrs. Meynell use?

“The most ugly of all imaginable rooms, which is probably the parlor of a farmhouse arrayed for those whom Americans call summer-boarders, is beset with flowers. It blooms, a dry, woolen, papery, cast-iron garden. The floor flourishes with blossoms adust, poorly conventionalized into a kind of order ; the table cover is ablaze with a more realistic florescence ; the wall paper is set with bunches ; the rigid machine-lace curtain is all of roses and lilies in its very construction ; over the muslin blinds an impotent sprig is scattered. In the worsted rosettes of the bell ropes, in the plaster picture-frames, in the painted tea tray and on the cups, in the pediment of the sideboard, in the ornament that crowns the barometer, in the finials of sofa and arm-chair, in the finger plates of the ‘grained’ door, is to be seen the ineffectual portrait or to be traced the stale inspiration of the flower—and what is this bossiness around the grate but some blunt, black-leaded garland ?”

—ALICE MEYNELL : *The Rhythm of Life*.

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8. Classify, by purpose and method, the following bits of discourse :—

(a) “Winter was winter. Snowdrifts were over your head, and ice was three feet thick. And zero—for boys who slept in attics to which no particle of artificial heat ever penetrated, zero was something like summer. Young America was tough in those days.

“I recall at this moment the bitterly cold day when one of our number skated into an airhole on Whitman’s Pond. It was during the noon recess. His home was a mile or more east of the pond, and the schoolhouse was at least a mile west of the pond. He sank into the water up to his chin,

and saved himself with difficulty, the airhole luckily being small and the ice firm about the edges. What would a twentieth-century boy do under such circumstances? I can only guess. But I know what Charles H. did. He came back to the schoolhouse first, to make his apologies to the master; I can see him now, as he came in smiling, looking just a little foolish; then he ran home—three miles, perhaps—to change his clothing. And he is living still. Oh, yes, we were tough,—or we died young.”

—BRADFORD TORREY: *The Clerk of the Woods*.

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(b) “The subject-matter of biological science is different from that of other sciences, but the methods of all are identical; and these methods are:—

“1. *Observation* of facts—including under this head that *artificial observation* which is called *experiment*.

“2. That process of tying up similar facts into bundles, ticketed and ready for use, which is called *comparison* and *classification*,—the results of the process, the ticketed bundles, being named *general propositions*.

“3. *Deduction*, which takes us from the general proposition to facts again—teaches us, if I may so say, to anticipate from the ticket what is inside the bundle. And finally—

“4. *Verification*, which is the process of ascertaining whether, in point of fact, our anticipation is a correct one.”

—THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY: *Lay Sermons*.

(c) “A woman has always a weakness for nature; with her, art is only beautiful as an echo or shadow of it. . . . She can never be utterly of the town, as a man can; indeed, do we not speak (with sacred propriety) of ‘a man about town’? Who ever spoke of a woman about town? How-

ever much, physically, 'about town' a woman may be, she still models herself on nature ; she tries to carry nature with her ; she bids grasses to grow on her head, and furry beasts to bite her about the throat. In the heart of a dim city, she models her hat on a flaring cottage garden of flowers. We, with our nobler civic sentiment, model ours on a chimney pot ; the ensign of civilization. And rather than be without birds, she will commit massacre, that she may turn her head into a tree, with dead birds to sing on it."

—GILBERT K. CHESTERTON : *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*.

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(d) "' This,' said he, lifting it up, ' is an ancient Gnostic amulet. It is called the " Moonlight Cross " of the Gnostics.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is made of precious stones cut in facets, with rubies and diamonds and beryls so cunningly set that, when the moonlight falls on them, the cross flashes almost as brilliantly as when the sunlight falls on them, and is kindled into living fire. These deep-colored crimson rubies — almost as clear as diamonds — are not of the ordinary kind. They are true " Oriental rubies," and the jewelers would tell you that the mine which produced them has been lost during several centuries. But look here when I lift it up ; the most wonderful feature of the jewel is the skill with which the diamonds are cut. The only shapes generally known are what are called the " brilliant " and the " rose," but here the facets are arranged in an entirely different way, and evidently with the view of throwing light into the very hearts of the rubies and producing this peculiar radiance.' "

—THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON : *Aylwin*.

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(e) "Democracy is not philanthropy ; it is not even altruism or social reform. Democracy is not founded on pity for the common man ; democracy is founded on reverence for the common man, or if you will, even in fear of him. It does not champion man because man is so miserable, but because man is so sublime. It does not object so much to the ordinary man being a slave as to his not being a king, for its dream is always the dream of the first Roman republic, a nation of kings."

— G. K. CHESTERTON : *Heretics*.

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9. In the following excerpts indicate the expository and the descriptive passages : —

(a) "Mrs. Brookfield describes Mrs. Carlyle as very slight, neat, erect in figure, animated in expression, with very good eyes and teeth, but with no pretension to beauty. She says she used 'to remain in her own room during the early part of the day, while her husband took his walks accompanied by his admirers. When she did appear she was always especially taken care of by Lady Ashburton, and she expected and was conceded a certain prominence amongst the many other visitors of more or less distinction in that delightful and hospitable house. Mrs. Carlyle's instinct was always to take the lead. At the Grange this was not easy, for the grandeur and brilliancy of our hostess, who, according to Mrs. Twistleton, scattered 'pearls and diamonds whenever she spoke,' made her the first attraction and interest to all around her. In conversation, clever and amusing as she often was, Mrs. Carlyle had the fatal propensity of telling her stories at extraordinary length. With her Scotch accent and her perseverance in finishing off every detail, those who were merely friendly acquaintances and not devotees sometimes

longed for an abridgment, and perhaps also to have their own turn in the conversation.”

— CHARLES and FRANCES BROOKFIELD : *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

(b) “Liked him better than I expected to. A large, tall man with black hair streaked with gray, black close-cut side-whiskers, prominent nose, large, coarse (but pure) mouth, and muscular neck. In fact, a much coarser man than you would expect to see, and stronger looking, a good specimen of the best English stock, plenty of color, a wholesome coarseness, and open-air look. One would say that he belonged to a bigger and more powerful race than the rest of the people in the room. His voice was husky, more like a sailor's, I thought, than the other voices I heard. When he talks to you he throws his head back (the reverse of Emerson's manner), and looks out from under his heavy eyelids, and sights you down his big nose — draws off as it were, and gives you his chin. It is the critical attitude, not the sympathetic — yet he does not impress one as cold and haughty, but quite the contrary.” — JOHN BURROUGHS : *Indoor Studies*.

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Copied from notebook — entry made after hearing Arnold lecture on Emerson in 1884.

(c) “In front of the skiff, far away on the horizon out of the black water, arose an enormous fiery-blue sword, cutting athwart the night, gliding edgewise over the clouds on the sky, and lying on the bosom of the sea in a broad blue strip. There it lay, and into the zone of its radiance there floated out of the dark the hitherto invisible black vessels, all silent and enshrouded in the thick night mists. It seemed as if they had lain for long at the bottom of the sea, drawn

down thither by the mighty power of the tempest, and now behold! They had risen from thence, at the command of the fiery sea-born sword, risen to look at the sky and at all above the water. Their tackle hugged the masts, and seemed to be ends of seaweed risen from the depths together with these black giants immeshed within them. And again this strange gleaming blue sword arose from the surface of the sea, again it cut the night in twain and flung itself in another direction. And again where it lay the dark hulls of vessels, invisible before its manifestation, floated out of the darkness.

“‘. . . That’s the customhouse cruiser. That is the electric lantern . . . what are you afraid of? . . . The lantern is a mirror — that’s all! . . . They incline the mirror this way and that, and so light up the sea in order that they may see whether folks like you and me, for instance, are sailing about anywhere. They do it to catch smugglers. They won’t tackle us. Don’t be afraid, clodhopper.’ . . .

“Gabriel kept silence, rowed, and breathed heavily, still gazing furtively in the direction where that fiery sword kept on rising and falling. He could by no means believe Chelkash that it was only a lamp with a reflector. The cold blue gleam, cutting the darkness asunder and making the sea shine with a silvery radiance, had something incomprehensible in it, and Gabriel again fell into the hypnosis of anxious terror.”

— MAXIM GORKY: *Chelkash*.

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10. Write a paragraph of exposition aided by description or argumentation.

11. Write two paragraphs on one subject. Let your first treatment of the subject be descriptive, the second expository.



## THE PROCESSES OF EXPOSITION



## THE PROCESSES OF EXPOSITION

### DEFINITION

DEFINITION and analysis are the proper and characteristic processes of exposition. Definition is synthetic; it considers the idea in its entirety. Analysis resolves it into its elements or considers partial phases or particular aspects of the whole. Definition and analysis usually occur together, the one supplementing the other. For example, in the first chapter of Shipley and MacBride's *Zoölogy*, we find the definition of evolution: "The progressive modification of species by the agency of natural selection is called Evolution." Immediately after the definition, we find the subject, evolution, divided and the two divisions, in turn, defined: "If the modification tends toward simplification of structure, it is called Degeneration; if, on the contrary, it tends toward great complexity, it is spoken of as Differentiation." We shall, however, examine one process at a time, considering first, definition.

Definition seeks complete identification. When this can be accomplished by the employment of a synonym, — when the unknown may be explained by the substitution of a known or familiar term, — the

work is simple indeed, but this is possible only where the idea under consideration is a familiar one and where the language offers two exactly equivalent words. Ordinarily, we reach an exact definition only through exact observation, comparison, and classification of facts, and painstaking expression of the results. We aspire in definition to name the class to which an object belongs, and to give those properties that distinguish it from other members of its class. If we were studying a circle, we might see that it had some resemblance to a sphere, but on further consideration decide that there is an essential difference, that the circle and the sphere do not belong in the same class; that the circle belongs not to solids, but to plane figures. Having classed it, the next step would be to differentiate it from a square and other members of its class. The difference is evidently in the boundary; the circle is a plane figure bounded by a curved line, every point of which is equally distant from the center of the figure. This is a satisfactory definition: The class plus the differentiation, or distinguishing quality, is the exact equivalent of "circle." The subject and predicate are interchangeable. We may say with perfect truth that every plane figure bounded by a curved line, every point of which is equally distant from the center of the figure, is a circle. That is, our definition includes all circles and excludes all things that are not circles.

Because of imperfect observation, too superficial comparison, incomplete classification, or inadequate power of inference, we are not always able to attain perfect definitions. In his lecture on *The Educational Value of Natural History Sciences*, Professor Huxley calls attention to this fact. He says:—

“So long as our information concerning them is imperfect, we class all objects together according to resemblances which we *feel*, but cannot define; we group them round *types*, in short. Thus, if you ask an ordinary person what kinds of animals there are, he will probably say, beasts, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, etc. Ask him to define a beast from a reptile, and he cannot do it; but he says, things like a cow or a horse are beasts, and things like a frog or a lizard are reptiles. You see *he does* class by type, and not by definition. But how does this classification differ from that of the scientific zoölogist? How does the meaning of the scientific class-name of ‘Mammalia’ differ from the unscientific of ‘Beasts’?”

“Why, exactly because the former depends on a definition, the latter on a type. The class Mammalia is scientifically defined as, ‘all animals which have a vertebrated skeleton and suckle their young.’ Here is no reference to type, but a definition rigorous enough for a geometrician. And such is the character which every scientific naturalist recognizes as that to which his classes must aspire—knowing, as he does, that classification by type is simply an acknowledgment of ignorance and a temporary device.”

—THOMAS H. HUXLEY: *Lay Sermons*.

In ordinary exposition our definitions are more often than not imperfect. Of the several subpro-

cesses of definition, usually, only one or two are employed. Much that passes for definition is mere classification. The student is apt to think he has told the whole story when he has said "a circle is a plane figure"; the teacher explains to the pupil, "A Flathead is an Indian," "The *Agaricus Campes- tris* is a mushroom," "A canoe is a skiff," "A Republic is a government"; "Poetry," said Matthew Arnold, "is a personal interpretation of life." On the other hand, where we give characteristics that are distinctive, we are apt to give meaningless classification or none at all; "A circle is bounded by a line, every point of which is equally distant from the center," merely implies the class. To begin a definition, "A chimpanzee is a creature," "An astrolabe is a contrivance," "Asbestos is a substance," "Conscience is something," is to go through the form of classification, but to make little headway in definition. Exact classification is very important; it is enlightening, and may be more. Mere categorization is often effective in challenging attention and provoking thought. This is especially true where the classification seems paradoxical, as when Mr. Phelps-Stokes classes the idle rich as paupers, when Ruskin calls money-making play, and Mr. Shaw ranges disobedience among the virtues.

While exact classification is often helpful and effective, and inexact classification is crude and re-

dundant, loose classification is sometimes better than close classification for the purpose of popular exposition. To class the *Dendroica cærulescens* as a small bird would seem a waste of words to an ornithologist, but to class it as a warbler and proceed to give the characteristics that distinguish it from other warblers, would be to omit much that those who are so ignorant of birds as to suppose that robins and orioles and larks are warblers, should know about the bird in question. We have to use common-sense here and remember that an exact classification that necessitates the use of terms that will not be exactly understood by the reader, defeats its own end.

It is permissible in approximate definition for a writer to omit the class and employ only the first step toward complete definition. He may take into consideration only the properties and manifestations that are discoverable from observation or study of his subject, and deny, affirm, or imply these. We do this when we say, true poetry is "simple, sensuous, and passionate"; true criticism is "disinterested," and so on. Denial is often used to imply what it is difficult to state explicitly, as "It was not orange and it was not red"; here the meaning evidently is that it was something between the two. Or denial may be so combined with affirmation as to give particular point to the affirmation; Channing in striving to define his ideal wrote that his endeavor was, "to seek elegance

rather than luxury, refinement rather than fashion, to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich." In characterizing the quiet of Charles Lamb, Walter Pater uses this method with greater elaboration: "In his writing, as in his life, that quiet is not the low-flying of one from the first drowsy by choice, and needing the prick of some strong passion or worldly ambition, to stimulate him into all the energy of which he is capable; but rather the reaction of nature after an escape from fate, dark and insane as in old Greek tragedy, following upon which the sense of mere relief becomes a kind of passion, as with one who, having narrowly escaped earthquake or shipwreck, finds a thing for grateful tears in just sitting quiet at home, under the wall, till the end of his days."

Again, the single process employed may be comparison; resemblances or differences may be affirmed, denied, or implied. The comparison may be fully expressed, as in a simile, as in Bacon's "Fame is like a river, that beareth up things light and swollen, and drowns things weighty and solid"; or it may be implied in metaphor, as when Bacon wrote, "Riches are the baggage of virtue." The comparison may be elaborated, but in approximate definition it is not always necessary to point out explicitly resemblances and differences; the value of such definition often lies in its suggestiveness, its appeal to the understanding through the imagination.



Frequently in partial definition a single process is repeated with good results, and we have a succession of comparisons, or of affirmations or denials of attributes, or a piling up of approximate synonyms. Newman, trying to make clear what he meant by "intellectual proficiency or perfection," called it "philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of the mind, or illumination." Emerson tried to flash out some idea of his conception of prudence by repeated definition — "Prudence is the virtue of the senses. It is the science of appearances. It is the outmost action of the inward life. It is God taking thought for oxen."

Humorous effects are often secured by repeating the process, as when Lamb piles up metaphors to express the exasperation excited by poor relations :—

"A Poor Relation — is the most irrelevant thing in nature, — a piece of impertinent correspondency, — an odious approximation, — a haunting conscience, — a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of our prosperity, — an unwelcome remembrancer, — a perpetually recurring mortification, — a drain on your purse, — a more intolerable dun upon your pride, — a drawback upon success, — a rebuke to your rising, — a stain in your blood, — a blot on your 'scutcheon, — a rent in your garment, — a death's head at your banquet, — Agathocles' pot, — a Mordecai in your gate, — a Lazarus at your door, — a lion in your path, — a frog in your chamber, — a fly in your ointment, — a mote in your eye, — a triumph to your enemy, — an apology to your

friends, — the one thing not needful, — the hail in harvest, — the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.”

— CHARLES LAMB: *Poor Relations*.

Several of the defining processes may be combined to bring out an intangible idea, as in the following passage, where charity is compared with other virtues, and particular manifestations are affirmed and denied: —

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

“Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

“Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

— *I Corinthians*, xiii.

Imperfect definition plays a larger part in literature than perfect definition, though in serious work the

perfect definition, implied or expressed, is the goal of partial definition. Perfect definitions do not spring full grown into being; they have been rightly described as "digests of abstractions," and if presented without the steps leading to them, they have meaning and value only for those who stand provided with the knowledge necessary to understand them, and lack only the formulation of that knowledge. Take, for example, Matthew Arnold's well-known definition of criticism as a "disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." For one who understands the definition, all has been said in three lines, but Arnold took as many as sixty pages to prepare his readers to take from it the meaning he wished it to convey.

Where we attempt the complete definition we should furnish any preparation necessary to make it intelligible, and we should seek in our formulation of the definition to be at once general and accurate, to make a definition broad enough to include whatever properly belongs under the term defined, and narrow enough to exclude everything else. Cardinal Newman's definition of a gentleman as one who never inflicts pain, taken literally, is too narrow — it excludes surgeons, judges, military men, most of those who have to do with the serious side of life. Mr. Phelps-Stokes, in defining a pauper as a member of society who, through disability or disinclination for self-

support by useful service, is supported at the expense of the people, sought to make his definition broad enough to include the idle rich, but in doing that he made it broad enough to include many of the busy rich, all invalids, insane people, thieves, women and children, who do not support themselves by some "useful service," and so on. Mr. Robert Hunter was perhaps more successful in his attempt to define poverty in such a way as to exclude irresponsible pauperism; he defines poverty as the anxious state of those who may get a bare sustenance, but are not able to obtain those necessities which will permit them to maintain a state of physical efficiency.

### EXERCISES

1. Which of the following aids for the classification of poetry suggested by Matthew Arnold in *The Study of Poetry*, would be, judged by Professor Huxley's standard (page 35), more scientific?

(a) "Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry."

(b) "The substance and matter of the best poetry acquire their special character from possessing in an eminent degree, truth and seriousness. We may add yet further, what is in itself evident, that to the style and

manner of the best poetry their special character, their accent, is given by their diction, and, even yet more, by their movement."

2. Criticise the following definitions :—

(a) A college is an institution for the education of young men.

(b) Dinner is the third meal in the day.

(c) An idealist is an artist who represents life not as it is, but as it might be.

(d) "Poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter truth." — ARNOLD.

(e) "A civil war is like the heat of a fever, but a foreign war is like the heat of exercise, and serveth to keep the body in health." — BACON.

(f) Thunder is a sound following a flash of lightning.

(g) "A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere." — EMERSON.

(h) "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed." — J. MONTGOMERY.

(i) Education is the process of fitting an individual for work by giving him essential knowledge, establishing in him right tendencies, and developing power.

(j) Socialists are those citizens who believe that the good of the individual should be sacrificed to the welfare of society.

(k) "Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them contributes to his mental health, power, and pleasure." — RUSKIN.

3. Write six definitions of familiar terms, making the definitions as nearly perfect as possible.

4. Discover the methods used in the following approximate definitions :—

“Humility or condescension, viewed as a virtue of conduct, may be said to consist, as in other things, so in our placing ourselves in our thoughts on a level with our inferiors ; it is not only a voluntary relinquishment of the privileges of our own station, but an actual participation or assumption of the condition of those to whom we stoop. This is true humility, to feel and to behave as if we were low ; not, to cherish a notion of our importance, while we affect a low position. Such was St. Paul’s humility, when he called himself ‘the least of the saints’ ; such the humility of those many holy men who have considered themselves the greatest of sinners. It is an abdication, as far as their own thoughts are concerned, of those prerogatives or privileges to which others deem them entitled. . . . as the world uses the word, ‘condescension’ is a stooping indeed of the person, but a bending forward, unattended with any the slightest effort to leave by a single inch the seat in which it is so firmly established. It is the act of a superior, who protests to himself, while he commits it, that he is superior still, and that he is doing nothing else but an act of grace towards those on whose level, in theory, he is placing himself.”

“Humility, with its grave and self-denying attributes, it [the world] cannot love ; but what is more beautiful, what more winning, than modesty ? What virtue, at first sight, simulates humility so well ? though what, in fact, is more radically distinct from it ? In truth, great as is its charm, modesty is not the deepest or the most religious of virtues.

Rather, it is the advanced guard or sentinel of the soul militant, and watches continually over its nascent intercourse with the world about it. It goes the round of the senses ; it mounts up into the countenance ; it protects the eye and ear ; it reigns in the voice and gesture. Its province is the outward deportment . . . and being more superficial than other virtues, it is more easily disjoined from their company ; it admits of being associated with principles or qualities naturally foreign to it, and is often made the cloak of feelings or ends for which it was never given to us. So little is it the necessary index of humility, that it is even compatible with pride."

— CARDINAL NEWMAN : *Knowledge and Religious Duty*.  
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"They are not beautiful : they are only decorated. They are not clean : they are only shaved and starched. They are not dignified : they are only fashionably dressed. They are not educated : they are only college passmen. They are not religious : they are only pew renters. They are not moral : they are only conventional. . . . They are not prosperous : they are only rich. They are not loyal : they are only servile ; not dutiful, only sheepish ; not public spirited, only patriotic ; not courageous, only quarrelsome ; not determined, only obstinate ; not masterful, only domineering ; not self-controlled, only obtuse ; not self-respecting, only vain ; not kind, only sentimental ; not social, only gregarious ; not considerate, only polite ; not intelligent, only opinionated ; not progressive, only factious ; not imaginative, only superstitious ; not just, only vindictive ; not generous, only propitiatory ; not disciplined, only cowed ; and not truthful at all."

— BERNARD SHAW : *Man and Superman*. By permission.

## The Prairies : —

“ My days and nights, as I travel here — what an exhilaration ! — not the air alone, and the sense of vastness, but every local sight and feature. Everywhere something characteristic — the cactuses, pinks, buffalo grass, wild sage — the receding prospective, and the far circle-line of the horizon all times of day, especially forenoon — the clear, pure, cool, rarefied nutriment for the lungs, previously quite unknown — the black patches and streaks left by surface-conflagrations — the deep-plow'd furrow of the ‘ fire-guard ’ — the slanting snow-racks built all along to shield the railroad from winter drifts — the prairie-dogs and the herds of antelope — the curious ‘ dry rivers ’ — occasionally a ‘ dugout ’ or corral — Fort Riley and Fort Wallace — those towns of the Northern plains (like ships on the sea) Eagle-Tail, Coyoté, Cheyenne, Agate, Monotony, Kit Carson — with ever the ant-hill and the buffalo-wallow — ever the herds of cattle and the cowboy (‘ cow-punchers ’) to me a strangely interesting class, bright-eyed as hawks, with their swarthy complexions and their broad-brimm'd hats — apparently always on horseback, with loose arms slightly raised and swinging as they ride.”

— WALT WHITMAN : *Specimen Days*. By permission.

“ The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blest ;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes :  
’Tis mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown ;  
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,



Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;  
But mercy is above this scepter'd sway ;  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself ;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice — therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That, in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation : we do pray for mercy ;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy."

— SHAKESPEARE : *Merchant of Venice*.

"The family is a good institution because it is uncongenial. It is wholesome precisely because it contains so many divergences and varieties. It is, as the sentimentalists say, like a little kingdom, and, like most other little kingdoms, is generally in a state of something resembling anarchy. It is exactly because our brother George is not interested in our religious difficulties, but is interested in the Trocadero Restaurant, that the family has some of the bracing qualities of the commonwealth. It is precisely because our Uncle Henry does not approve of the theatrical ambitions of our sister Sarah that the family is like humanity. The men and women who, for good reasons and bad, revolt against the family are for good reasons and bad, simply revolting against mankind. Aunt Elizabeth is unreasonable, like mankind. Papa is excitable, like mankind. Our youngest brother is mischievous, like mankind. Grandpapa is stupid, like the world ; he is old, like the world.

"Those who wish, rightly or wrongly, to step out of all this, do definitely wish to step into a narrower world. They

are dismayed and terrified by the largeness and variety of the family. Sarah wishes to find a world wholly consisting of private theatricals; George wishes to think the Trocadero a cosmos." — G. K. CHESTERTON: *Heretics*.

By permission of the John Lane Company.

"The energy of the mind or of the soul — for it welds all psychical activities — which is the agent of our world-winnings and the procreator of our growing life, we term imagination. It is distinguished from perception by its relative freedom from the dictation of sense; it is distinguished from memory by its power to acquire, — memory only retains; it is distinguished from emotion in being a force rather than a motive; from the understanding in being an assimilator rather than the mere weigher of what is set before it; from the will, because the will is but the wielder of the reins, — the will is but the charioteer, the imagination is the Pharaoh in command. It is distinguished from all these, yet it includes them all, for it is the full functioning of the whole mind, and in the total activity drives all mental faculties to its one supreme end — the widening of the world wherein we dwell. Through beauty the world grows, and it is the business of the imagination to create the beautiful. The imagination synthesizes, humanizes, personalizes, illumines reality with the soul's most intimate moods, and so exalts with spiritual understandings."

— HARTLEY BURR ALEXANDER: *Poetry and the Individual*.

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"I propose to go on now to discuss the mental quality of America as I have been able to focus it . . . and first, and chiefly, I have to convey what seems to me the most significant and pregnant thing of all. It is a matter of something

wanting, that the American shares with the great mass of prosperous middle-class people in England. I think it is best indicated by saying that the typical American has no 'sense of the state.' I do not mean that he is not passionately and vigorously patriotic. But I mean that he has no perception that his business activities, his private employments, are constituents in a larger collective process; that they affect other people and the world forever, and cannot, as he imagines, begin and end with him. He sees the world in fragments; it is to him a multitudinous collection of individual 'stories'—as the newspapers put it. If one studies an American newspaper, one discovers it is all individuality, all a matter of personal doings, of what so and so said and how so and so felt. And all these individualities are unfused. Not a touch of abstraction or generalization, no thinnest atmosphere of reflection, mitigates these harsh, emphatic, isolated happenings. The American, it seems to me, has yet to achieve what is, after all, the product of education and thought, the conception of a whole to which all individual acts and happenings are subordinate and contributory."—H. G. WELLS: *The Future in America*.

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5. Choose any of the selections that have been given, for a model, and write a paragraph of approximate definition on a parallel topic.

6. Choose a subject for a theme and develop it by approximate definition, giving first its qualities or manifestations by denial and affirmation; next, compare it suggestively with several things in quick succession; compare it at length with some one thing; give a complete definition of it.

## ANALYSIS

### PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

HAVING discussed definition, the process that views a subject in its entirety, we are ready to consider analysis, the process that resolves a subject into its constituent parts. To say that analysis assumes something to be divided, a unit, to begin with, would seem to be to utter a self-evident truth, yet we shall often find ourselves going to work as if analysis were a piecing together of fragments to form a mosaic—we start with no unified idea, but instead, seek to compose, to construct a unit out of scraps. The result of such work is apt to show traces of its scrap-bag origin. If it is not actually in disconnected sections, at least the seams are perceptible. We should try at the outset to take a comprehensive view of our subject, and by analysis discover what natural divisions a discussion of it should fall into for its best presentation.

A scientific division requires that the parts taken together should equal the whole, no more, no less. A division of which this is true is an exhaustive division. In composition, the completeness of division must be determined by the purpose of the writer.

If I were writing for a college catalogue, it would be important to mention special students, graduate students, and all possible classes of students ; but for a college song the customary division of the student body into freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, would be thorough enough. Lamb divided mankind into two races : borrowers and lenders. For the sake of completeness he would have been obliged to add, those who neither borrow nor lend, and those who both borrow and lend. But an exhaustive division did not suit his purpose ; he seized upon those divisions that concerned him, and rejected, if he saw, the others.

For ordinary purposes it is neither necessary nor desirable to make an exhaustive division. In most cases an informal partition, including only what the writer wants to write about, takes the place of a division that includes all the parts of a subject, or all conceivable particular phases of the subject. The paper that is written as the amplification of an analysis or outline that is exhaustive, is wanting in purpose and in interest. There are phases of the subject that are too well known or too unimportant to require exposition, or too profound to be treated intelligently by the writer. If, for the sake of completeness and symmetry, these points are included in the outline, and presented in the development of the outline, the result is unreadable. Nothing is left to

the reader's intelligence. The writer has not limited himself to that part of the subject on which he has something to say. More jejune school composition work is due to the student's attempt to "cover the ground"—to leave no division of the subject without presentation and discussion, than to any other mistaken ideal of writing.

It is, then, important to have a comprehensive view, not of the subject unrestricted, but of the subject as you intend to treat it. In other words, you should know at the outset the sum of what you will write. The best test of your general grasp of your subject for writing is the same as that by which you gauge your grasp of what you have read. If you want to be sure that from the first reading you have comprehended the trend of an article or a story, you write a summary of it. So, if you wish to be sure you know the purpose and trend of what you want to write, you will set it before yourself in the shape of a summary. A summary of a prospective paper should be made before an outline is begun. They differ in that the summary is synthetic, the outline analytic; the summary seeks to bring the whole into one connected view; the outline places the emphasis on the parts and shows the whole in its ramifications.

At the beginning of the fifth of his *Lectures on Race-Power*, Professor Woodberry gives a transitional

paragraph that furnishes an admirable summary of the whole series of lectures. He says:—

“The general principle which I have endeavored to set forth in the first four lectures is that mankind, in the process of civilization, stores up race-power, in one or another form, so that it is a continually growing fund ; and that literature, preëminently, is such a store of spiritual race-power, derived originally from the historical life, or from the general experience of men, and transformed by imagination so that all which is not necessary falls away from it, and what is left is truth in its simplest, most vivid and vital form. Thus I instanced mythology, chivalry, and the Scriptures, as three such sifted deposits of the past ; and I illustrated the use poetry makes of such race-images and race-ideas, by the example of the myth of the Titans. In the remaining four lectures I desire to approach the same general principle of the storing of race-power from the starting point of the individual author — to set forth Spenser, Milton, Wordsworth, and Shelley, not in their personality, but as race-exponents, and to show that their essential greatness and value are due to the degree in which they availed themselves of the race-store.” —GEORGE E. WOODBERRY : *The Torch*.

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Such a summary makes clear to the writer what he must exclude ; it prevents his admitting what may come under the general subject, but does not contribute to his purpose with reference to the subject, and so prevents his cumbering his paper with material that would really violate unity. Further, the summary shows him what he may include ; it enables him to see the propriety of admitting topics

that, without its guidance, he might feel forced to exclude. It is a rule of analysis that divisions must not be overlapping, they must be mutually exclusive; that is, no two divisions must include the same material. If one were writing about the students of a college, and were to make the headings in his outline, grinds, self-supporting students, athletes, fraternity men, parasites, his divisions would be open to the criticism that they were overlapping, since the self-supporting student might be a grind, an athlete, or a fraternity man, and a fraternity man might be a self-supporting student and an athlete as well. If, however, he had begun with the following summary, a legitimate basis for division, the dominant unacademic interest, would stand revealed. "College society is no longer homogeneous; many interests aside from those of the scholar demand the modern student's time and attention. The bookworm is there, but he is no longer the college type. The gridiron-hero, the athlete, is the most conspicuous of those having a dominant unacademic interest. Less obtrusive, but quite as distinctive, types are the self-supporting student, the society man, the parasite." From this point of view the divisions are not overlapping. He is ready to begin his outline as follows:—

College types:—

I. Students whose only interest is in study—"grinds."



II. Students who have dominant unacademic interests —

*A.* The athlete.

*B.* The fraternity man.

*C.* The self-supporting man, etc.

Divisions at cross-purposes interfere with right selection of material and right arrangement as well. Unless we have a uniform motive for division, our arrangement must be confused; we shall be constantly darting forward and running back, instead of making steady progress. In a general way we may say that analysis gives the parts or elements that constitute an object; groups of parts or elements, and particular properties, or groups of properties. As a rule we should not rank as coördinate topics, elements and groups of elements, since the groups may include the several elements; nor should we rank as coördinate, elements and properties, as the properties pertain to the elements, and will be discussed in connection with the elements. If a boy planning to write about a house divides his subjects under the heads, its convenience, its beauty, its cost, the rooms, the basement, the kitchen, the plan, — we can detect no common motive for division; we find properties, parts, and groups of parts jumbled together. The first three topics evidently are not coördinate with the last four; under convenience the writer would probably consider the basement, the kitchen, and

the plan in general, besides many topics not given in the list. Under beauty he would certainly consider the rooms. Further, rooms and kitchen are not coördinate, as rooms would include kitchen.

To be quite sure that the analysis covers those phases of the subject he wishes to treat and that the divisions call for no repetition, the student should form the habit of writing out a complete outline before he attempts to write an exposition. If his summary has been previously made, he will start in the right way, conceiving of outline making as a parting of a unit. His first business will be to decide what general phases of his subject he must treat to bring out his main idea. Having decided upon *all* of the main divisions, he should take them up one at a time, analyzing each fully before proceeding to the next. In the analysis of the successive subtopics, all of the chief divisions of a topic should be determined before the subdivision of any one of them is considered. Thus, if we were writing about a kind of fish, we might feel certain that we wished to tell about its appearance. We should not, however, employ ourselves upon the subdivision of that topic into size, form, color, features, until after we have determined the general divisions, coördinate with it, as its habits, its value, that are to receive our attention in the course of the outline. Persistence in this order of procedure will do something toward breaking up habits of frag-

mentary thinking, of catching at a corner of a subject instead of taking a broad, clear view of it.

Then, just as in reading an outline, instead of following it line by line, we glance down the page for the main divisions, so in writing an outline for our own guidance, we jot down first the chief divisions. If our subject is *The Loach*, our first step toward making an outline is to reach the principal divisions; let us say they are:—

- I. Its appearance.
- II. Its habits.
- III. Its value.

The second step is to answer the question, What points shall be considered under *appearance*? If the answer is to be,

- A. Size,
- B. Form,
- C. Color,

we are not free to subdivide *A. Size*, until *B.* and *C.* have been decided upon. We may then, however, take them in turn and find their subdivisions and subsubdivisions, and when that is done proceed to II. Its habits, treating this topic in the same manner.

The working order is somewhat different from the order of the finished outline, whose purpose is to make the relation of the parts clear. The working order as has been explained is as follows:—

The Loach :—

- |                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I. Its appearance.                   | I. <i>C.</i> Color.              |
| II. Its habits.                      | 1. General color.                |
| III. Its value.                      | 2. Spots.                        |
| I. Its appearance.                   | II. Its habits.                  |
| <i>A.</i> Size.                      | <i>A.</i> Places frequented.     |
| <i>B.</i> Form.                      | <i>B.</i> Feeding.               |
| <i>C.</i> Color.                     | <i>C.</i> Breeding.              |
| I. <i>A.</i> Size.                   | II. <i>A.</i> Places frequented. |
| 1. Length.                           | 1. Regions.                      |
| 2. Thickness.                        | 2. Kind of streams.              |
|                                      | 3. Parts of streams.             |
| I. <i>B.</i> Form.                   |                                  |
| 1. General outline.                  | II. <i>B.</i> Feeding.           |
| 2. Particular features.              | 1. Food.                         |
|                                      | 2. Manner of taking it.          |
| I. <i>B.</i> 2. Particular features. | II. <i>C.</i> Breeding.          |
| <i>a.</i> Wattles.                   | III. Its value.                  |
| <i>b.</i> Fins.                      | <i>A.</i> Nourishment.           |
| <i>c.</i> Tail.                      | <i>B.</i> Flavor.                |

While this is the most significant order in constructing an outline, it is not satisfactory for the finished outline, since it is much less graphic than the following order:—

## The Loach :—

## I. Appearance.

*A.* Size.

1. Length.
2. Thickness.

*B.* Form.

1. General outline.
2. Particular features.
  - a.* Wattles.
  - b.* Fins.
  - c.* Tail.

*C.* Color.

1. General color.
2. Spots.

## II. Habits.

*A.* Places frequented.

1. Regions.
2. Kind of streams.
3. Parts of streams.

*B.* Feeding.

1. Food.
2. Manner of taking it.

*C.* Breeding.

## III. Value.

*A.* Nourishment.*B.* Flavor.

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR. The instructor will notice that top-

ics rather than sentences are used in this outline. There are several reasons for this : In the first place the topical outline is much less laborious to write than a sentence outline — always an important consideration and particularly so with reference to the outline, which is fundamentally an effort-saving device ; in the second place the brief and graphic topical outline accomplishes better the outline's purpose of picturing to the eye the parts of the discourse and their relation ; in the next place the topical outline is more flexible, dominates the paragraph less rigidly, and is less apt to lead the student into rigid, monotonous sentences baldly stating relationship. Finally, when, in argumentation, the particular sentence form and relationship demanded by the brief are reached, the student is less confused and more likely to use the right kind of sentences if the sentence outline is for him an entirely new method.

In such an outline as this it is better to use words or phrases to indicate headings than to use sentences. Coördinate topics should, so far as possible, be given similar form. For convenience in marking and discussing outlines, it is desirable that the method of indicating the parts should be uniform. The practice employed in the outline given, Roman numerals for the principal divisions, capital letters for the next lower divisions, Arabic numerals for the next, then small letters, then numerals in parentheses, and so on — is recommended as simple and intelligible.

It should be remembered that we cannot divide and get as a result less than two parts. This means that we should never have in an outline one subtopic

without another of the same rank. That is, it would not do if you were writing about Turner's *Slave Ship*, to give color alone as a subtopic under beauty. If you were not going to speak of beauty of line, but of beauty of color alone, that part of your outline would be, not

C. Beauty

1. Color,

but rather,

C. Beauty — color.

### EXERCISES

1. Read the following passage carefully and

(a) Write a summary of it.

(b) Make a careful outline of it.

“Different indeed is the atmosphere in which Scotch and English youth begin to look about them, come to themselves in life, and gather up those first apprehensions which are the material of future thought and, to a great extent, the rule of future conduct. I have been to school in both countries, and I found, in the boys of the North, something at once rougher and more tender, at once more reserve and more expansion, a greater habitual distance chequered by glimpses of a nearer intimacy, and on the whole wider extremes of temperament and sensibility. The boy of the South seems more wholesome, but less thoughtful; he gives himself to games as to a business, striving to excel, but is not readily transported by imagination; the type remains with me as cleaner in mind and body, more active, fonder of eating, endowed with a lesser and a less romantic

sense of life and of the future, and more immersed in present circumstances. And certainly, for one thing, English boys are younger for their age. Sabbath observance makes a series of grim, and perhaps serviceable, pauses in the tenor of Scotch boyhood — days of great stillness and solitude for the rebellious mind, when in the dearth of books and play, and in the intervals of studying the Shorter Catechism, the intellect and senses prey upon and test each other. The typical English Sunday, with the huge midday dinner and plethoric afternoon, leads perhaps to different results. About the very cradle of the Scot there goes a hum of metaphysical divinity ; and the whole of two divergent systems is summed up, not merely speciously, in the two first questions of the rival catechisms, the English tritely inquiring, ‘What is your name?’ the Scottish striking at the very roots of life with, ‘What is the chief end of man?’ and answering nobly, if obscurely, ‘To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.’ I do not wish to make an idol of the Shorter Catechism ; but the fact of such a question being asked opens to us Scotch a great field of speculation ; and the fact that it is asked of all of us, from the peer to the plowboy, binds us more nearly together. No Englishman of Byron’s age, character, and history, would have had patience for long theological discussions on the way to fight for Greece ; but the daft Gordon blood and the Aberdonian school days kept their influence to the end. We have spoken of the material conditions ; nor need much more be said of these : of the land lying everywhere more exposed, of the wind always louder and bleaker, of the black, roaring winters, of the gloom of high-lying, old stone cities, imminent on the windy seaboard ; compared with the level streets, the warm coloring of the brick, the domestic quaintness of the architecture, among



which English children begin to grow up and come to themselves in life. As the stage of the university approaches, the contrast becomes more express. The English lad goes to Oxford or Cambridge ; there, in an ideal world of gardens, to lead a semi-scenic life, costumed, disciplined, and drilled by proctors. Nor is this to be regarded merely as a stage of education ; it is a piece of privilege besides and a step that separates him further from the bulk of his compatriots. At an earlier age the Scottish lad begins his greatly different experience of crowded class rooms, of a gaunt quadrangle, of a bell hourly booming over the traffic of the city to recall him from the public-house where he has been lunching, or the streets where he has been wandering fancy-free. His college life has little of restraint, and nothing of necessary gentility. He will find no quiet clique of the exclusive, studious, and cultured ; no rotten borough of the arts. All classes rub shoulder on the greasy benches. The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain, clownish laddie from the parish school. They separate, at the session's end, one to smoke cigars about a watering-place, the other to resume the labors of the field beside his peasant family. The first muster of a college class in Scotland is a scene of curious and painful interest ; so many lads, fresh from the heather, hang round the stove in cloddish embarrassment, ruffled by the presence of their smarter comrades, and afraid of the sound of their own rustic voices. It was in these early days, I think, that Professor Blackie won the affection of his pupils, putting these uncouth, umbrageous students at their ease with ready human geniality. Thus, at least, we have a healthy, democratic atmosphere to breathe in while at work ; even when there is no cordiality, there is always a juxtaposition of the

different classes, and in the competition of study the intellectual power of each is plainly demonstrated to the other. Our tasks ended, we of the North go forth as freemen into the humming, lamplit city. At five o'clock you may see the last of us hiving from the college gates, in the glare of the shop windows, under the green glimmer of the winter sunset. The frost tingles in our blood ; no proctor lies in wait to intercept us ; till the bell sounds again, we are the masters of the world ; and some portion of our lives is always Saturday, *la trêve de Dieu*."—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: *The Foreigner at Home*.

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2. Indicate possible places for paragraph indentions in the foregoing selection.

3. Select three of the following subjects and plan two quite different papers on each ; write a summary and an outline for each paper :—

(a) Christmas presents.

(b) My hobby.

(c) Newspapers.

(d) Winter sports.

(e) Traveling.

(f) Friendship.

(g) Patriotism.

#### THE MANIFESTATION OF ANALYSIS IN COMPLETED WORK

Firmness of structure is one of the indispensable requirements of serious exposition. It is dependent on full, clear analysis and a well-ordered outline. In

the finished work the divisions are sometimes declared, but not always. If the work is of an informal character, the preliminary analysis usually makes itself felt indirectly. The writer is guided by his outline in the selection and the arrangement of his material, but he does not necessarily announce the plan he is following. He leaves it to the intelligence of the reader to discover that for himself.

The student will find no difficulty in following the outline of the following paragraph :—

“The loach is, as I told you, a most dainty fish ; he breeds and feeds in little and clear, swift brooks or rills, and lives there upon the gravel and in the sharpest streams : he grows not to be above a finger long, and no thicker than is suitable to that length. This loach is not unlike the shape of the eel ; he has a beard or wattles like a barbel. He has two fins at his sides, four at his belly, and one at his tail ; he is dappled with many black or brown spots ; his mouth is barbel-like under his nose. This fish is usually full of eggs or spawn, and is by Gesner, and other learned physicians, commended for great nourishment, and to be very grateful both to the palate and stomach of sick persons : he is to be fished for with a very small worm at the bottom, for he very seldom or never rises above the gravel, on which I told you he usually gets his living.”

— IZAAK WALTON : *The Complete Angler*.

Though the writer uses no terms to aid us in grouping the details he gives, it is easy to see that he has three main divisions — the habits of the loach, its appearance, and its food value. It is not necessary, then,

that you announce your plan so long as you have one and adhere to it.

There are certain mechanical means for indicating the plan that should not be disregarded ; namely, paragraph indentions and punctuation. Had each of the three principal divisions been more fully developed, a separate paragraph should have been devoted to each. As it is, there should be a full sentence-stop between divisions. That there is not, is, judged by modern standards, a blunder in punctuation.

In long papers we often find formal announcement of the partition of the subject. The explicit statement of the partition occurs usually in the introduction, the conclusion, or in transitional paragraphs.

Partition at the outset has usually one of two purposes, — to narrow the subject of discussion or to serve the reader as a guide to the plan of the coming essay. In the latter case the partition is a partition of the subject in hand ; in the first, it is a partition of the class to which the subject belongs. When I say exposition is one of the four forms of discourse, the other forms being description, narration, and argumentation, I have made a division, not of exposition, but of the subject under which exposition falls, — discourse. The purpose of such a partition is to dismiss from discussion the three forms of discourse that the loose thinker might otherwise confuse with exposition. This amounts in effect to negative definition. When I say

exposition proceeds by means of definition and analysis, I am making a division of the subject, exposition.

In an article on "The Study of National Culture" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1907, Professor Kuno Francke, in his introductory paragraph, makes a division, not to forecast his plan, but to show the relation of his subject to a larger subject. He says:—

"The history of a nation may be studied under two main heads,—civilization and culture. When we speak of national civilization, we mean thereby all that contributes to the shape of the outward conditions and conduct of life: the modes of gaining a livelihood, the organization of the family, the forms of domestic and public custom, social gradations, political, legal, and ecclesiastical institutions, and the friendly or hostile contact with other nations. When we speak of national culture, we mean thereby all that contributes to shape the inner life, to enrich the world of feeling, imagination, and thought: religious and philosophical movements, tendencies in literature and art, ideal aspirations, intellectual and spiritual revelations. Civilization makes the citizen, culture makes the man; civilization has to do with specific conditions, culture has to do with values of universal application; civilization is the form, culture is the content of national consciousness. But neither of the two can develop without the other; they constantly exert a reciprocal influence on each other; and only he who has studied comprehensively both the civilization and the culture of a given nation, is in a position to estimate what this nation has contributed to the whole of the world's history."

—KUNO FRANCKE: "The Study of National Culture."

*The Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1907.

Ruskin begins his lecture on *Work* with a partition of the first class, narrowing his subject by dividing men into two classes, the idle and the industrious, and eliminating the idle. He then makes a division of the second kind, giving the range of his lecture and its chief divisions as follows :—

“These separations we will study, and the laws of them, among energetic men only, who, whether they work or whether they play, put their strength into the work, and their strength into the game ; being in the full sense of the word ‘industrious,’ one way or another—with a purpose or without. And these distinctions are mainly four :—

“I. Between those who work, and those who play.

“II. Between those who produce the means of life, and those who consume them.

“III. Between those who work with the head, and those who work with the hand.

“IV. Between those who work wisely, and those who work foolishly.

“For easier memory, let us say we are going to oppose, in our examination :—

“I. Work to play ;

“II. Production to consumption ;

“III. Head to hand ; and

“IV. Sense to nonsense.”

— JOHN RUSKIN : *Work*.

Through the lecture, at intervals, the scheme or plan of the lecture is held before the listener’s mind by the following sentences :—

“This then is the first distinction between the upper and

lower classes. . . . I pass then to our second distinction ; between the rich and the poor, between Dives and Lazarus. . . . I pass now to our third condition of separation, between the men who work with the hand and those who work with the head. . . . I must go on, however, to our last head, concerning ourselves all, as workers. What is wise work and what is foolish work? What the difference between sense and nonsense in daily occupation?"

These cementing passages that keep the plan of the whole in mind and join the sections of a discourse by referring to the topics already treated and pointing forward to those that remain to be considered, are called transitions. In a long, formal, intricate paper, the transitions are frequently quite as obvious as those just quoted from Ruskin. But in a short, informal paper, the way is indicated, if at all, in such a manner that the reader is scarcely aware that he is being provided with an outline. The warp of analysis is so concealed by the woof of definition that it is distinguished only by those on the lookout for it.

Opening Robert Louis Stevenson's *Talk and Talkers*<sup>1</sup> at random, I find in this informal paper by a writer who gives the impression of being as far as need be from hard and fast adherence to rhetorical regulations, in the course of a single paragraph, the following introductory statement of plan and two references to it. The discussion of "Purcel" opens with the statement: "He is no debater, but appears

<sup>1</sup> By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

in conversation, as occasion rises, in two distinct characters, one of which I admire and fear, and the other love." "In the first," the writer proceeds, "he is radiantly civil." A few lines farther on we are again reminded of the opening division of the subject by the clause: "and that is one reason out of a score why I prefer my Purcel in his second character, when he unbends into a strain of graceful gossip, singing like the fireside kettle."

It is well worth while to cultivate the art of making transitions so that they shall not stand apart and attract attention to themselves, but shall do their work without obtruding themselves on the reader's consciousness. When this can be done, firmness of structure and freedom of expression are made to seem consonant qualities. Rigidity and mechanical stiffness of movement are a high price to pay for even so high an excellence as an unimpeachable, unmistakable structure.

At the close of a paper there is often a statement of divisions of the subject. Here, as in the introduction, the enumeration of the divisions may be for the purpose of summary, a resurvey of the points discussed, a recapitulation of the topics presented, or it may be an out-reaching division, one that, viewing the discussion in its entirety, places it as a member of a larger whole. In the conclusion to his *Essay on Style*, Walter Pater gives both kinds of partition:—



“Given the conditions I have tried to explain as constituting good art;—then, if it be devoted further to the increase of men’s happiness, to the redemption of the oppressed, or the enlargement of our sympathies with each other, or to such presentment of new or old truth about ourselves and our relation to the world as may ennoble and fortify us in our sojourn here, or immediately, as with Dante, to the glory of God, it will be great art; if, over and above those qualities I summed up as mind and soul,—that color and mystic perfume, and that reasonable structure,—it has something of the soul of humanity in it, and finds its logical, its architectural place in the great structure of human life.”

—WALTER PATER: *Style*.

Here we find the divisions of his own subject, mind and soul or reasonable structure and color and perfume, restated, and that subject, good art, related to *great art*.

It is, perhaps, well to caution the student of exposition at this point against the supposition that a conclusion must be a summing up of points made in the essay. The most effective conclusion is, as a rule, not one that enumerates the topics discussed, but one that flashes some new light over them all, or iterates in a telling way the unifying note that has been sounding through the entire discourse.

The purpose of the declaration of partitions is clearness. A five or ten page theme will require little announcement of its divisions, if the writer has kept those divisions clearly before him in writing.

If he has not done so, the mere statement of what the divisions ought to be will not lessen the confusion.

Have a full, clear, well-organized outline, follow it closely, and announce your plan, when needful, in such a way that your announcement will help rather than interrupt the onward movement of the thought you are presenting.

### EXERCISES

I. What is accomplished by the introduction quoted below?

"I am not to speak to you of the history of art, nor of its theory, nor its philosophy, except incidentally. The rise of the schools of painting, the biographies of the great painters, the nature of the ideal, the real and the beautiful, you will find in books. My subject is, in one sense, of a humbler nature. It is more material, more technical, and, if you choose, more practical. I shall speak of painting as practiced by the painters of to-day and yesterday; and, as nearly as possible, I shall attempt to treat the subject from the point of view of the artist, not that of the metaphysician nor that of the public. It shall be my endeavor to get at the aim of the painter, and to examine art-products in the light of the producer's intention. In doing this the drift of these lectures should be, not toward teaching one how to paint a picture, but rather toward giving one some idea of how to appreciate a picture after it has been painted. Such, at least, is their object, and with this object in view, I shall endeavor to explain and illustrate such pictorial

motives as color, tone, atmosphere, values, perspective. I shall call your attention, so far as is practicable, to certain well-known pictures, pointing out their good and bad qualities, and making my remarks apply as much as possible to modern art, of which we have, perhaps, too poor an opinion."

— J. C. VAN DYKE: *Art for Art's Sake*.

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2. Study the passages quoted below and tell what their value is:—

(a) "It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views." — EMERSON: *Self-Reliance*.

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(The next paragraph begins, 1. In what prayers, etc.; the next, 2. It is for want of self-culture, etc.)

(b) "I propose to mark firmly what is ridiculous and odious in the Shelley brought to our knowledge by the new materials, and then show that our former beautiful and lovable Shelley nevertheless survives." — ARNOLD: *Shelley*.

(c) "Let us see these [Gray's high qualities] in the man first, and then observe how they appear in his poetry; and why they cannot enter into it more freely and inspire it with more strength, render it more abundant."

— ARNOLD: *Thomas Gray*.

(d) "First each novel, and then each class of novels, exists by and for itself. I will take, for instance, three main classes, which are fairly distinct: first, the novel of adventure, which appeals to certain almost sensual and quite

illogical tendencies in man; second, the novel of character, which appeals to our intellectual appreciation of man's foibles and mingled and inconstant motives; and third, the dramatic novel, which deals with the same stuff as the serious theater, and appeals to our emotional nature and moral judgment."

— ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON : *A Humble Remonstrance*.

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3. Notice the method by which Emerson gives the impression of having his subject thoroughly in hand, of never losing the sense of what he has said and what he is about to say in his essay *Compensation*. From the following sentences occurring at the opening of paragraphs, tell the topic to be treated in the coming paragraph, and, where it is possible, that disposed of in the previous paragraph :—

(General introduction : "I shall attempt in this and the following chapter to record some facts that indicate the path of the law of compensation.")

1. "Polarity, or action and reaction, we meet in every part of nature; in darkness and light; in heat and cold; in the ebb and flow of waters."

2. "Whilst the world is thus dual, so is every one of its parts."

3. "The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man."

4. "This law writes the laws of cities and nations."

5. "The human soul is true to these facts in the painting of fable, of history, of law, of proverbs, of conversation."

6. "You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong."

7. "On the other hand, the law holds with equal sureness for all right action."

4. Study the following paragraphs and derive from them the central idea and the chief topics discussed in the paper to which they form a conclusion. What are the two methods used in this conclusion?

"The treatment of Copley Square, on which the library faces, is the best evidence of the quality of that public life which has given Boston the most democratic administration of the larger American cities. It is a centrally located, triangular square, bounded by three of the chief thoroughfares, and faced by the public library, the New Old South church, Richardson's masterpiece, Trinity church, the art gallery, and a number of dignified private structures. One of the last, an apartment house, was constructed in violation of the sky line established for Copley Square, and while tedious litigation was necessary for the protection of the æsthetic standards established by Boston authorities, the public interests have finally triumphed.

"It was no mere quibble which led to the prosecution of a landlord, who by virtue of a doubtful public document, undertook to carry out the caprice of erecting a building which should by a few feet of elevation do violence to good taste and the public will. It was stern insistence on the superior importance of the public good and merited rebuke of the typical impertinence of private interests. It was the same spirit which asserted by peaceful legal methods that the function of the railways was to serve the traveling public, and that the interests of the community demanded the municipal ownership of the subway; the spirit which ignored the town boundaries and local jealousies and provided

water and sewerage systems which would satisfy the needs of the metropolitan district ; the spirit which interrupted the private vandalism that was desecrating Boston's natural environment and consecrated for all time great areas of natural beauty for the promotion of life and happiness ; it was the spirit which preserved the democracy of the old town meeting, while it developed the latent power of coöperation in the modern metropolis. This civic spirit has made metropolitan Boston the most progressive of the greater American communities."

— CHARLES ZUEBLIN : *A Decade of Civic Development.*

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5. Read the passage quoted from Stevenson's *The Foreigner at Home* on pages 61-64 and underline the transitional phrases and clauses.

6. Take one of the outlines called for by the third exercise on page 64, and write out an introduction, a conclusion, and transitions between the main divisions, that shall announce in a clear, but not too obvious, way the divisions of your paper.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF EXPOSITION





## THE FUNCTIONS OF EXPOSITION

### PRESENTATION

It must be clear to a careful reader that definition and analysis do not exist in literature alone and independently of each other. They go on together, one process making opportunity for the other and contributing its part toward fulfilling the functions of exposition. They may be applied by the writer with the purpose of transcribing facts and appearances, with no attempt to explain or point out their significance; or they may be applied with a view of giving the writer's theory or interpretation of perceptible facts or of some abstract idea. In the first case the resulting exposition may be called presentation; in the second, interpretation. In general in the news columns of the daily paper we find the objective statement of facts; in the editorial columns we find the editor's interpretation of them. Both the reportorial method and the editorial method are important. Every one should be able to give a clear, full, unbiased statement of observed facts. Every one should be able to see some meaning in the facts, to have some ideas about them. Often presentation and interpretation go hand in hand, but this is not necessarily so.

We shall consider first presentation unaided by comment or explanation.

A particular object or event may be presented by the reporter's method. The following outline will suggest the definition and analysis necessary for a reporter's presentation of the subject, *The Bellevue Sanatorium*:—

- I. Its purpose.
- II. Its plant.
  - A. Location.
    - 1. Geographical.
    - 2. Scenic.
  - B. Buildings and grounds.
    - 1. Size.
    - 2. Character.
    - 3. Equipment.
- III. Its operation.
  - A. Rules and regulations.
  - B. Methods of treatment.
  - C. Medical staff.
- IV. Its success.

A reporter's account of a battle would include the occasion, the site, the strength, condition, and commanders of the armies, the plan of action, results in dead and wounded, territory gained, and so on.

When the reporter's method is applied to a class instead of to an individual object or event, it is called the scientific method. A scientific exposition of a

squirrel would give its physical characteristics, its habits, its range, and so on. This exposition might include under the appearance of the animal such a description as would enable one to see it as it appeared from a fixed point of view at a given moment, but it should include more. For example, in the matter of color, the exposition would give not only the general effect from one point of view, but the actual color of the various parts and the individual hairs. Note in the following passage the presentation of the *gray squirrel* and the group to which it belongs.

#### RODENTS OR GNAWING ANIMALS (Glires)

“Animals of this group may be recognized at once by the peculiar arrangement of their teeth. In the front of the mouth are two large conspicuous teeth (incisors) in each jaw, which meet vertically like two pairs of chisels, and form a very powerful apparatus for gnawing or cutting. The remaining teeth are broad, flat-topped grinders (molars) placed in the back of the mouth, while between the two, where the tearing teeth (canines) of the carnivorous animals are situated, the jaws are quite bare. The large gnawing teeth are further peculiar in being curved and deeply rooted in the jaws, while they also grow continuously from the base as they wear away at the tip, so that they never become ‘worn out.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“Squirrels . . . differ from the mice and their allies in their bushy tails and many peculiarities in their anatomical structure, an important one being that the two lower leg bones are separate, and not fused together as in the mice, thus allowing them to use their limbs more freely in climbing

— a habit which is characteristic of a majority of the species.

“Gray Squirrel.

“*Sciurus Carolinensis* Gmelin.

“Length, eighteen inches.

“Description. Similar in build to the fox squirrel, with large bushy tail. Color yellowish gray, individual hairs banded with rusty-yellow and black, decidedly rusty on the face, feet, and sides. Below white. Hairs of tail rusty-yellow at base, black in the middle, with white tips.

“Range. Florida to southeastern Pennsylvania, Hudson valley, Indiana, and Missouri; replaced in the North and West by slightly different geographical varieties.”

— WITMER STONE and WILLIAM EVERITT CRAM: *American Animals*. Copyright, 1902, by Doubleday, Page and Company.

While this passage is not finished exposition in that the material is not presented in connected, literary form, it gives a good idea of what subject-matter is admitted to such exposition.

Classes whose distinguishing traits are less tangible may be treated by this method. We might have a direct, objective presentation of the subject beggars: such an article would give their number, the known causes of their condition, their attitude toward labor, the way in which they make a living, etc.; the treatment would be altogether different from Charles Lamb's enjoyable sketch of that class in his essay, *The Decay of Beggars*.

The presentation of a process is a common form of exposition, either as an element in a more complex

discourse or as an exposition complete in itself. A paper on golf might be devoted wholly to how to play golf, or that theme might be made part of a paper that included the history of the game, its present status, etc.

Fishing, how to make pins, the French, Unitarianism, in short, anything about which a body of admitted facts exists, may be made the subject of direct presentation by the reporter's method,—even such subjects as charity, generosity, chivalry, may receive virtually objective treatment. This is the case when the writer merely transcribes the accepted conventional views regarding them, without giving his peculiar "sense of fact."

The interest of presentation will depend largely on the novelty and interest of the subject chosen. The value of such a piece of work will depend upon the selection of significant facts and the impersonal, accurate presentation of them in a related way. To present a complex subject adequately requires training. Most of us are poor observers. We are satisfied with first impressions, with a superficial view, or we see what we expect to see or wish to see, rather than what is. On looking away from an object we do not remember what we have seen in anything but a vague, blurred way. Few of us could draw an outline of so familiar a thing as the map of the United States without looking several times at a model. Agassiz is said to have given a would-be scientist a

fish with the injunction, "Study your fish." When the student reported that he had mastered the subject, he was questioned and again enjoined, "Study your fish"; the next time he was not in such haste to recite, but waited until he was quite sure he knew all there was to know about that fish. With a few searching questions the master sounded the youth's knowledge and again commanded, "Study your fish." This was repeated till the boy learned to use his eyes as he had never before dreamed of using them. A similar tale is told with the artist Benjamin West for the master, Samuel Breese Morse for pupil, and the drawing of a human hand for the test of his power of observation. We need to cultivate the power of closer and more accurate observation. For this reason it is advisable to choose for objective presentation a subject which makes it possible to write "with the eye on the object." If you visited a salmon canning establishment, a logging camp, or a coal mine, last year, however much you may have been impressed at the time, unless you took notes, you scarcely have the data in hand for an accurate report of the industry you observed.

After exact information the reporter needs most, unwarped vision. He must have the power to see things as they are, unbiased by personal feeling. Without this power, whatever else he is, idealist, poet, — he is no reporter.

Given these fundamental requirements, exact information and power to take the impersonal view, the reporter must have the skill, the art, to select and group his facts in such a way that what he writes will convey the impression he has with truth and accuracy. This part of the work has been discussed at some length, but we will briefly review the steps of the procedure.

The first step necessary is to make a partition of the subject with the purpose of narrowing it, of eliminating those points we do not wish to discuss and including those which are needful to the accomplishment of our purpose regarding the subject. This is a preliminary step and the division will not appear in the outline; we make it that we may reach the theme or topic we wish to discuss, and it is but a rough division. For example, if we decide to give a general view of the subject, we must omit details; if we wish to give the picturesque phases of a subject, we will bar out much that from a scientific point of view is fundamental and important; if our treatment is to be technical, we must sacrifice much that is of human interest. Having narrowed the subject and from the general subject — say school — having derived the topic on which we wish to write, as, for example, the history of the Hawthorne School; the management of the Hawthorne School; the sports of the Hawthorne School; the fraternities of the Hawthorne School;

the English work of the Hawthorne School; the buildings and grounds of the Hawthorne School; the discipline of the Hawthorne School; my zoölogy class; my classmates; the school magazine, etc., our next task is to make the summary that will give the range and set the limits for the outline by expressing clearly the writer's purpose with respect to his subject. When the outline has been completed, first in working order, and afterward recast in the order best suited to the graphic portrayal of the parts and their relations, we are ready to write.

It should be understood that our purpose with regard to the subject must be perfectly clear to us. Some hold that our intention with reference to some specific audience should be equally clear. As a rule, however, unless his purpose is purely didactic, a writer should be unconscious of any specific audience. Papers adapted to classes of people reach no one; addresses to school children, sermons to boarding-school misses, lectures to working-men, judged by any absolute standard, are vapid performances. If you wish to learn to write well, determine what you wish to do with respect to your subject, and write from yourself—to whom is a matter of no consequence. If the work *expresses* something of value, it will find an audience to *impress*. Let your type of mind, your habit of thought, determine your audience, not your audience your habit of thought. If you have a Hans



Christian Andersen type of mind, you will write for children; if you have the Matthew Arnold or the Emerson type of mind, you will write for grown people; if you are changeable, with shifting moods and varying powers, you will write to William Sharp's<sup>1</sup> audience to-day and to Fiona Macleod's<sup>1</sup> audience to-morrow.

In so far as we do suppose an audience, let it be an audience of other selves; of readers of intelligence equal to our own. We shall then not make the mistake of overexplicitness. If we are too explicit, we defeat the end for which we are so; the reader with an active mind must use it; if nothing is left to his willing inference, his mind wanders while his eye follows the unnecessary words, or he resorts to skipping, or he lays aside the article altogether as dull and slow.

### EXERCISES

1. Make a careful outline of the following:—

“Many persons in Japan earn their living during the summer months by catching and selling fireflies: indeed, the extent of this business entitles it to be regarded as a special industry. The chief center of this industry is the region about Ishiyama, in Goshū, by the Lake of Ōmi,—a number of houses there supplying fireflies to many parts of the country, and especially to the great cities of Ōsaka and Kyōtō. From sixty to seventy firefly-catchers are employed by each of the principal houses during the busy season.

<sup>1</sup> It was not known until after Mr. Sharp's death that he and Fiona Macleod were the same.

Some training is required for the occupation. A tyro might find it no easy matter to catch a hundred fireflies in a single night ; but an expert has been known to catch three thousand. The methods of capture, although of the simplest possible kind, are very interesting to see.

“Immediately after sunset, the firefly-hunter goes forth, with a long bamboo pole upon his shoulder, and a long bag of brown mosquito-netting wound, like a girdle, about his waist. When he reaches a wooded place frequented by fireflies, — usually some spot where willows are planted, on the bank of a river or lake, — he halts and watches the trees. As soon as the trees begin to twinkle satisfactorily, he gets his net ready, approaches the most luminous tree, and with his long pole strikes the branches. The fireflies, dislodged by the shock, do not immediately take flight, as more active insects would do under like circumstances, but drop helplessly to the ground, beetle-wise, where their light — always more brilliant in moments of fear or pain — renders them conspicuous. If suffered to remain upon the ground for a few moments, they will fly away. But the catcher, picking them up with astonishing quickness, using both hands at once, deftly tosses them *into his mouth* — because he cannot lose the time required to put them one by one, into the bag. Only when his mouth can hold no more, does he drop the fireflies, unharmed, into the netting.

“Thus the firefly-catcher works until about two o’clock in the morning, — the old Japanese hour of ghosts, — at which time the insects begin to leave the trees and seek the dewy soil. There they are said to bury their tails, so as to remain viewless. But now the hunter changes his tactics. Taking a bamboo broom he brushes the surface of the turf, lightly and quickly. Whenever touched or alarmed by the broom,

the fireflies display their lanterns, and are immediately nipped and bagged. A little before dawn, the hunters return to town.

“At the firefly-shops the captured insects are sorted as soon as possible, according to the brilliancy of their light, — the more luminous being the higher-priced. Then they are put into gauze-covered boxes or cages, with a certain quantity of moistened grass in each cage. From one hundred to two hundred fireflies are placed in a single cage, according to the grade. To these cages are attached small wooden tablets inscribed with the names of customers, — such as hotel proprietors, restaurant-keepers, wholesale and retail insect-merchants, and private persons who have ordered large quantities of fireflies for some particular festivity. The boxes are dispatched to their destinations by nimble messengers, — for goods of this class cannot be safely intrusted to express companies.

“Great numbers of fireflies are ordered for display at evening parties in the summer season. A large Japanese guest-room usually overlooks a garden; and during a banquet or other evening entertainment, given in the sultry season, it is customary to set fireflies at liberty in the garden after sunset, that the visitors may enjoy the sight of the sparkling. Restaurant-keepers purchase largely. In the famous Dōtombori of Ōsaka, there is a house where myriads of fireflies are kept in a large space inclosed by mosquito-netting; and customers of this house are permitted to enter the inclosure and capture a certain number of fireflies to take home with them.

“The wholesale price of living fireflies ranges from three sen per hundred up to thirteen sen per hundred, according to season and quality. Retail dealers sell them in cages; and in Tōkyō the price of a cage of fireflies ranges from three sen up to several dollars. The cheapest kind of cage, con-

taining only three or four fireflies, is scarcely more than two inches square ; but the costly cages — veritable marvels of bamboo work, beautifully decorated — are as large as cages for songbirds. Firefly cages of charming or fantastic shapes — model houses, junks, temple-lanterns, etc. — can be bought at prices ranging from thirty sen up to one dollar.

“Dead or alive, fireflies are worth money. They are delicate insects, and they live but a short time in confinement. Great numbers die in the insect-shops ; and one celebrated insect-house is said to dispose every season of no less than five shō — that is to say, about one peck — of dead fireflies, which are sold to manufacturing establishments in Ōsaka. Formerly fireflies were used much more than at present in the manufacture of poultices and pills, and in the preparation of drugs peculiar to the practice of Chinese medicine. Even to-day some curious extracts are obtained from them ; and one of these, called *Hotaru-noabura*, or Firefly-grease, is still used by woodworkers for the purpose of imparting rigidity to objects made of bent bamboo.

“A very curious chapter on firefly medicine might be written by somebody learned in the old-fashioned literature. The queerest part of the subject is Chinese, and belongs much more to demonology than to therapeutics. Firefly-ointments used to be made which had power, it was alleged, to preserve a house from the attacks of robbers, to counteract the effect of any poison, and to drive away ‘the hundred devils.’ And pills were made with firefly substance which were believed to confer invulnerability ; — one kind of such pills being called *Kanshōgan*, or ‘Commander-in-Chief Pills’ ; and another, *Buigan*, or ‘Military-Power Pills.’ ”

—LAFADIO HEARN : *Kottō*.

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2. Is this account of the firefly industry presentation or interpretation? Why?

3. What processes are employed below? For the purpose of presentation or interpretation?

(a) "I shall use the term zoölogy as denoting the whole doctrine of animal life, in contradistinction to botany, which signifies the whole doctrine of vegetable life.

"Employed in this sense, zoölogy, like botany, is divisible into three great but subordinate sciences, — morphology, physiology, and distribution, — each of which may, to a very great extent, be studied independently of the other.

"Zoölogical morphology is the doctrine of animal form or structure. Anatomy is one of its branches; development is another; while classification is the expression of the relations which different animals bear to one another, in respect to their anatomy and their development.

"Zoölogical distribution is the study of animals in relation to the terrestrial conditions which obtain now, or have obtained at any previous epoch of the earth's history.

"Zoölogical physiology, lastly, is the doctrine of the functions or actions of animals. It regards animal bodies as machines impelled by certain forces, and performing an amount of work which can be expressed in terms of the ordinary forces of nature. The final object of physiology is to deduct the facts of morphology on the one hand, and those of distribution on the other, from the laws of the molecular forces of matter."

— THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY: *Lay Sermons*.

(b) "In the experience of many anglers, creek or river minnows are preferable to those from lakes or ponds, particularly if one is fishing for black bass or wall-eyed pike.

The best bait species are those that are found in the swiftly flowing water of the riffles. Not only are the species better, but the fish are more vigorous and active, and more tenacious of life, as well as more silvery or brightly colored, which are the points chiefly determining the excellence for a bait minnow, as such. To be effective, a bait minnow must be bright or silvery enough to attract the attention of the fish, it must be active to show that it is alive, albeit in distress or under restraint, and its tenacity of life must be great to enable it to withstand the changed and constantly changing environment and the slight physical injury incident to its being impaled upon the hook. The size of the minnows selected will, of course, be determined by the kind of fishing the angler wishes to do."

—DAVID STARR JORDAN and BARTON W. EVERMANN :  
*American Food and Game Fishes.*

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(c) "Over the blue-gray slope of tiled roofs there is a vast quivering and fluttering of extraordinary shapes, — a spectacle not, indeed, new to me, but always delicious. Everywhere are floating — tied to very tall bamboo poles — immense brightly colored paper fish, which look and move as if alive. The greater number vary from five to fifteen feet in length ; but here and there I see a baby scarcely a foot long, hooked to the tail of a larger one. Some poles have four or five fish attached to them at heights proportioned to the dimensions of the fish, the largest always at the top. So cunningly shaped and colored these things are that the first sight of them is always startling to a stranger. The lines holding them are fastened within the head ; and the wind, entering the open mouth, not only inflates the body to perfect form, but keeps it undulating, — rising and de-

scending, turning and twisting, precisely like a real fish, while the tail plays and the fins wave irreproachably. In the garden of my next-door neighbor there are two very fine specimens. One has an orange belly and a bluish-gray back ; the other is all a silvery tint ; and both have big weird eyes. The rustling of their motion as they swim against the sky is like the sound of wind in a canefield."

—LAFCADIO HEARN : *After the War*.

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4. Considered apart from their context, to what form of discourse do the first two paragraphs given below belong? The second two? In what circumstances could they be regarded as presentation for the purpose of exposition?

"The Bluebirds nested just outside the dining-room window on the third floor of a suburban apartment house. This building is in the town of Wellesley and surrounded by other houses, but on one side it stands close to the eastern slope of a long, low ridge that forms one of the natural boundaries of the college grounds. Oak-woods, sprinkled with pine, crown the hill and extend one third of the way down over the eastern side. Birds of many feathers frequent this wooded slope. In the springtime Warblers glean about its edges, the Great-crested Flycatcher whistles, buoyant, as he flies from tree to tree, and notes of the Wood Thrush rise through the stillness of late afternoon like bubbles from the bottom of a spring.

"The window to which the Bluebirds came is the west one of a southwest bay, and looks straight out and up to the wooded hill. A house stands opposite, a little higher

on the slope, surrounded by an apple orchard, some trees of which stray down to the yard immediately beneath. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

"In the afternoon he gave from the nest, for the first time, the call-note, and five minutes later scrambled up to the opening. Hopping to the edge of the shelf, he called again, and then, putting his trust in his untried wings, he flew straight off and up to a tree one hundred feet away. The old birds had been watching and followed now, guarding his course till he alighted. Another flight to the roof of the neighboring house, with some imperfect attempts at stopping, and he was off to the hill, still tended by his watchful parents.

"An hour later the male came back to the nest-porch, and seated himself against the entrance. Now and then he looked inquiringly into the nest. The umbrella had been taken down, but after it was raised he came again and took a drink ; after that he disappeared and nothing more was seen of the Bluebird tenants."

— MARIAN E. HUBBARD : *Bluebird Tenants*.

By permission.

5. To what do the following passages on *How to live on Thirty Pounds a Year*, and *How to build a Fire*, owe their interest?

(a) "He assured Johnson, who, I suppose, was then meditating to try his fortune in London, but was apprehensive of the expense, that thirty pounds a year was enough to enable a man to live there without being contemptible. He allowed ten pounds for clothes and linen. He said a man might live in a garret at eighteen pence a week ; few people



would inquire where he lodged ; and if they did, it was easy to say, "Sir, I am to be found at such a place." By spending threepence in a coffeehouse, he might be for some hours every day in very good company ; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper ; on *clean-shirt day* he went abroad, and paid visits." — BOSWELL : *Life of Johnson*.

(b) "We piled, with care, our nightly stack  
Of wood against the chimney-back, —  
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,  
And on its top the stout back-stick ;  
The knotty fore-stick laid apart,  
And filled between with curious art  
The ragged brush ; then, hovering near,  
We watched the first red blaze appear,  
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam  
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,  
Until the old, rude-furnished room  
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom :  
While radiant, with a mimic flame  
Outside the sparkling drift became,  
And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree  
Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free."

—WHITTIER : *Snow-Bound*.

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6. Write six or eight pages of exposition presenting some object or place. It must be exposition, not *description*.

7. Write six or eight pages of exposition presenting some process or particular undertaking. It must be exposition, not *narration*.

## INTERPRETATION

IN the kind of exposition already considered, the facts about an object are presented in and for themselves, because of their own value and interest. Even here the personality of the writer colors his work more or less, but the aim of the writer is to be a transparent medium through which the object discussed may be viewed by the reader. The reporter's attitude toward the facts he is presenting, so far as his work reveals it, is that of Wordsworth's Peter Bell toward the primrose : —

“A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.”

If he can see a hidden significance in his subject, if he is moved by it, he must be able to detach this personal, subjective impression from the external objective fact, and let no hint of it appear in his report.

The class of exposition we are about to consider is one with which Peter Bells of the pen have nothing to do. The interpreter must be a man of ideas, a man of insight. His attitude toward the “primrose” is described in Tennyson's *Flower in the Crannied Wall* : —

“Flower in the crannied wall  
I pluck you out of the crannies,

I hold you here root and all in my hand  
Little flower — but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all and all in all  
I should know what God and man is."

He is concerned with forms and appearances only as they help him to some inner meaning, as they furnish a basis for inference, as they suggest something beyond themselves, and enable him to discover relationships, and form or substantiate theories. This work may be of a grandiose character like that of the philosopher, preacher, or publicist, or it may be graceful, light, humorous, like the essays of Lamb and Stevenson.

Subjects that may be transcribed, presented, admit of interpretative treatment: a face, a place, a man's life, a society, an institution, an act, a statue, a picture, a verse, a cathedral, may call for interpretation. Interpretation often supplements presentation. The writer's personal view comes as a conclusion to the objective presentation of his subject, or his opinions accompany his account as running comment. But where interpretation is the main object of the writer, we find facts transcribed for the purpose of sustaining or giving point to the interpretation.

Carlyle does not give a description, a photographic presentation of Dante's face; he takes for granted your acquaintance with the facts of the face and

refers to them only to make his interpretation more convincing : —

“The Book ; and one might add that Portrait commonly attributed to Giotto, which, looking on it, you cannot help inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it is a most touching face ; perhaps of all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it ; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless ; — significant of the whole history of Dante ! I think it is the mournfullest face that ever was painted from reality ; an altogether tragic, heart-affective face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child ; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud, hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice ! Withal it is a silent pain, too, a silent, scornful one : the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean, insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face is one wholly in protest, and life-long unsundering battle against the world. Affection all converted into indignation : an implacable indignation ; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god ! The eye, too, it looks out in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of inquiry, why the world was of such a sort ? This is Dante ; so he looks this ‘voice of ten silent centuries,’ and sings us ‘his mystic unfathomable song.’

—CARLYLE : *Heroes and Hero Worship*.

Carlyle’s method is often the same on a larger

scale, as in *Mahomet*. Though he assumes less knowledge of facts here, and presents them more explicitly, he subordinates presentation to interpretation. He gives, not a narrative biographical sketch, but presents only those facts in the life and environment of Mahomet that develop his theme — the sincerity of Mahomet. The relation of all parts of the lecture to that theme is suggested by the following outline: —

*Introduction* : —

- I. Impostor theory dismissed as impossible.
- II. Faults dismissed as unessential.

*Development* : —

- I. Sincerity demanded by background.
  - A. Country uncompromising.
    1. Mountains.
    2. Deserts.
    3. Heat.
    4. Emptiness.
  - B. People in earnest.
    1. Passionate.
    2. Controlled.
    3. Religious.
- II. Sincerity fostered by early life.
  - A. Personal loyalty inculcated by example of family.
  - B. Curiosity excited by journey.
  - C. Self-dependence necessitated by
    1. Absence of books.

## 2. Isolation.

## III. Sincerity manifested.

*A.* In private life.

## 1. In business relations.

## 2. In marriage.

*B.* In religion.

## 1. Its rise.

*a.* When he was advanced in years.*b.* Out of his long-continued practice.

## 2. Its fundamental dogmas.

*a.* One God.*b.* Submission.

## 3. Its promulgation.

*a.* In face of opposition.*b.* With success.

## 4. The Koran.

*a.* Its influence.*b.* Its confusion.*c.* Its originality.*d.* Its rigor.*C.* In his want of sensuality.

1. Reverence in which he was held by those who knew him face to face.

2. In his life in times of trial.

3. In Koran.

*a.* In betterment of what was gross.*b.* In spiritual essence.*D.* In the effect of his teaching.

This method is not peculiar to Carlyle in sketches that deal with objects or events. It is the ordinary biographical-essay method, where something more than the biographical-dictionary record of a man's life is wanted, and where complete presentation and discussion are not possible. The writer chooses what seems to him the vital, significant quality, the essence of a man's life and work, and shows how it has been developed and manifested in that life and work. The important consideration here is to seize the true quality of the man, and not to ascribe a false one that will necessitate a warping and twisting of facts to sustain the writer's theory regarding his subject.

This method is frequently applied to historic as well as to personal records. Henry Adams's account of the battle of Tippecanoe in the sixth volume of his *History of the United States*, is so given as to sustain his conviction that the battle was forced upon the Indians.

In expository essays on places, the writer frequently determines upon the general character or spirit of a place, and presents the phases that show forth that character or spirit. Arthur Symons begins his sketch of Seville, "Seville, more than any city I have ever seen, is the city of pleasure." The explicitness of Rome is the theme of his essay on the eternal city: "The Soul of Rome," he says, "is a very positive soul . . . in which it is useless to search

for delicate shades, the mystery of suggestion, a meaning other than the meaning which, in a profound enough sense, is on the surface." The antiquity of the town, is the unifying idea for Mr. Henry James's notes on Chester.

Some unifying idea of this sort is a safeguard against fragmentary work, and may be an element of strength in a piece of exposition. If, however, it gives the reader the feeling that the writer is sacrificing naturalness and truth to serve his theory, it is worse than useless. Further, while it is well for us to be sensitive to the atmosphere, as they say, pervading persons and places, and to phrase that impression for ourselves, it is not well to be so captivated by the first impression, or any one impression, that we are insensitive to counter influences when they exist. To prevent the unfair dominance of a single idea, it is well to write a reporter's presentation of an object before writing an interpretation of it. This is a valuable practice in traveling: to write the first letter about a new place after the reporter's method, to make the second your interpretation. While interpretation leads in the exposition we are considering, to have value, it must, in the writer's experience, follow careful, impersonal observation.

Speculation about, interpretation of, classes of objects having corporeal reality or based on more intangible, subjective distinctions, makes delightful essays.



Stevenson's and Maeterlinck's essays on the dog, the latter's treatment of the automobile, are examples of entertaining reflections and speculations on classes of material things. Newman's idea of a gentleman affords a good example of the definition and analysis of a class that is not determined by physical attributes. He writes :—

“ . . . it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him ; and he concurs with their movements rather than take the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature : like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman, in like manner, carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast, — all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment ; his great concern being to make every one at ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company ; he is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant, and merciful toward the absurd ; he can recollect to whom he is speaking ; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate ; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends

himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves toward our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds, who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration, indulgence: he throws himself into the minds of his opponents; he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable, beautiful, or useful, to which

he does not assent; he honors the ministers of religion, and it contents him to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilization."

—JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: *Knowledge and Religious Duty*.

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Criticism of art, letters, public affairs, the exegesis of texts, speculation on such purely abstract ideas as character, genius, love, education, belong under interpretative exposition. The more abstract the subject, the more the writer must depend upon himself for what he writes. Emerson could write on friendship, compensation, self-reliance, in such a way as to interest, convince, and stimulate his reader. His essays on these familiar subjects are interesting, not because they present novel theories or eccentric ideas, but because they tell us much that we all recognize to be true, but which we had not thought out for ourselves. The interpreter must not go off on tangents and put faith in the unusual and the fantastic to secure interest. He must rather work harder than his readers work along the line on which they work, and see more deeply into the heart of things than they see without his help. He must open the way, not that his readers may have a curious or entertaining vista, but that they may follow him. It takes one who is a thinker to do

this. There are some lines upon which all of us have done a good deal of feeling and thinking, and if we take pains to find out exactly what we think and feel and to present it in a specific, suggestive, individual way, we shall be interesting, even though our ideas are not novel. It is our writing from within, our giving what on close analysis we find ourselves to believe rather than the conventional view that we have accepted from others, that makes our interpretation vital. If we reach by our own processes a well-known truth, it comes out as fresh and alive in its effect as if it had never before been enunciated.

The methods by which we develop such subjects are still definition and analysis. Definition by synonym, by scientific method, by the affirmation and the denial of identity, resemblance, causes, qualities, manifestations, or effects, any and all of these methods may be used before the subject is resolved by analysis into elements or phases that in turn call for definition.

Concrete phrasing in presenting abstract truth is usually more interesting than abstract. For an illustration of this, take the following two sentences from Herbert Spencer's *Philosophy of Style*: "In proportion as the manners, customs, and amusements of a nation are cruel and barbarous, the regulations of their penal code will be severe."

"In proportion as men delight in battles, bull-fights,

and combats of gladiators, will they punish by hanging, burning, and the rack."

### EXERCISES

1. What is the purpose of the following editorial? Write a statement of the fact upon which it is based:—

"The action of the Senate has assured both Senators and Representatives that their pay will be raised from \$5000 a year to \$7500. This increase of fifty per cent marks, we doubt not, the rough estimate of Congress as to the recent increase in the cost of living. If we are to do anything more than give our lawmakers a mere honorarium, \$7500 is not, under present circumstances, too large a salary. The English system of an unpaid Parliament does not accord with our traditions and sentiments. For one thing, we do not care to recognize officially a class of landed or wealthy gentlemen who give their services to the government, and who thus secure for their class—almost inevitably—rather more consideration than its numbers or intelligence would warrant. In Germany the pay of members of the Reichstag is low, and, as a consequence, the representatives of labor, as in England too, are often supported by labor organizations. Such members can scarcely be more than mere spokesmen for the unions—just as some of our senators . . . are only mouthpieces for railways or other corporations. In a crisis such retained attorneys can never exhibit independence of judgment. If, then, we are fully committed to the principle of fair play, we see no reason why, in addition to allowances for secretaries and clerks, the Congressmen should not share the general rise in wages."

— *The Nation*, Vol. 84, No. 2170, p. 96.

2. Write an editorial for a magazine devoted to the improvement of the condition of animals, based on the following news paragraph in the Monday morning issue of a daily paper:—

“Yesterday afternoon at about three o'clock, when the heat was most intense, the attention of a passer-by was attracted by the condition of the caged birds and animals in the window of A. B. Street's animal store. One of the birds was dead ; all of the animals in the unshaded window seemed to be on the verge of heat prostration. By dint of some effort the proprietor was found, and relief was brought to the suffering animals.”

3. Write a news paragraph for a school paper, presenting without comment some matter of general school interest.

Write an editorial based on your news paragraph.

4. *a.* Read carefully Newman's sketch of St. Philip Neri (page 109) and make an outline of it.

*b.* Select for similar treatment some character of fiction or history, as : Lincoln, Joan of Arc, Henry V., Brutus, Sir Roger de Coverley, David, Joseph, Mahomet, Shylock, etc.

*c.* Write a piece of biographical exposition about the person chosen : —

First, discover the keynote of the character's life.

Secondly, select those particulars in his environment that make that character significant, as Newman gave the allurements of the world as the

background for the exercise of St. Philip's purpose of making felt the counter fascination of purity and truth.

Thirdly, state his distinctive characteristics.

Fourthly, show how he differed from other influential characters working in the same field.

Fifthly, characterize definitely by aim and method. Comment. Give results. Give testimony. Close with clinching evidence of success or failure:—

“He [St. Philip Neri] lived in an age as traitorous to the interests of Catholicism as any that preceded it, or can follow it. He lived at a time when pride mounted high, and the senses held rule; a time when kings and nobles never had more of state and homage, and never less of personal responsibility and peril; when mediæval winter was receding, and the summer sun of civilization was bringing into leaf and flower a thousand forms of luxurious enjoyment; when a new world of thought and beauty had opened upon the human mind, in the discovery of the treasures of classic literature and art. He saw the great and the gifted, dazzled by the Enchantress, and drinking in the magic of her song; he saw the high and the wise, the student and the artist, painting, and poetry, and sculpture, and music, and architecture, drawn within her range and circling round the abyss; he saw heathen forms mounting thence, and forming in the thick air,—all this he saw, and he perceived that the mischief was to be met, not with argument, not with science, not with protests and warnings, not by the recluse or the preacher, but by means of the great counter fascination of purity and truth. He was raised up to do a work

almost peculiar in the Church, — not to be a Jerome Savonarola, though Philip had a true devotion toward him, and a tender memory of his Florentine house ; not to be a St. Charles, though in his beaming countenance Philip had recognized the aureole of a saint ; not to be a St. Ignatius, wrestling with the foe, though Philip was termed the Society's bell of call, so many subjects did he send to it ; not to be a St. Francis Xavier, though Philip had longed to shed his blood for Christ in India with him ; not to be a St. Caietan, or hunter of souls, for Philip preferred, as he expressed it, tranquilly to cast in his net to gain them ; he preferred to yield to the stream, and direct the current, which he could not stop, of science, literature, art, and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God had made very good and man had spoilt.

“And so he contemplated as the idea of his mission, not the propagation of the faith, nor the exposition of doctrine, nor the catechetical schools ; whatever was exact and systematic pleased him not ; he put from him monastic rule and authoritative speech, as David refused the armor of his king. No ; he would be but an ordinary individual priest as others, and his weapons should be but unaffected humility and unpretending love. All he did was to be done by the light, and fervor, and convincing eloquence of his personal character and his easy conversation. He came to the Eternal City and he sat himself down there, and his home and his family gradually grew up around him, by the spontaneous accession of materials from without. He did not so much seek his own as draw them to him. He sat in his small room, and they in their gay worldly dresses, the rich and the well-born, as well as the simple and the illiterate, crowded into it. In the mid-heats of summer, in the frosts



of winter, still was he in that low and narrow cell at San Girolamo, reading the hearts of those who came to him, and curing their souls' maladies by the very touch of his hand. It was a vision of the Magi worshipping the infant Savior, so pure and innocent, so sweet and beautiful was he; and so loyal and dear to the gracious Virgin Mother. And they who came remained gazing and listening, till at length, first one and then another threw off their bravery, and took his poor cassock and girdle instead: or, if they kept it, it was to put haircloth under it, or to take on them a rule of life, while to the world they looked as before.

"In the words of his biographers, 'he was all things' to all men. He suited himself to noble and ignoble, young and old, subjects and prelates, learned and ignorant; and received those who were strangers to him with singular benignity, and embraced them with as much love and charity as if he had been a long while expecting them. When he was called upon to be merry, he was so; if there was a demand for his sympathy, he was equally ready. He gave the same welcome to all; caressing the poor equally with the rich, and wearying himself to assist all to the utmost limits of his power. In consequence of his being so accessible and willing to receive all comers, many went to him every day, and some continued for a space of thirty, nay, forty years, to visit him very often both morning and evening, so that his room went by the agreeable nickname of the Home of Christian Mirth. Nay, people came to him, not only from all parts of Italy, but from France, Spain, Germany, and all Christendom; and even the infidels and Jews, who had ever any communication with him revered him as a holy man.' The first families of Rome, the Massimi, the Aldobrandini, the Colonnas, the Altieri, the Vitel-

leschi, were his friends and his penitents. Nobles of Poland, Grandees of Spain, Knights of Malta, could not leave Rome without coming to him. Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops were his intimates; Federigo Borromeo haunted his room and got the name of 'Father Philip's soul.' The Cardinal-Archbishops of Verona and Bologna wrote books in his honor. Pope Pius the Fourth died in his arms. Lawyers, painters, musicians, physicians, it was the same, too, with them. Baronius, Zazzara, and Ricci left the law at his bidding, and joined his congregation, to do its work, to write the annals of the Church, and to die in the odor of sanctity. Palestrina had Father Philip's ministrations in his last moments. Animuccia hung about him during life, sent him a message after death, and was conducted by him through Purgatory to Heaven. And who was he, I say, all the while, but a humble priest, a stranger in Rome, with no distinction of family or letters, no claim of station or of office, great simply in the attraction with which a Divine Power had gifted him? and yet thus humble, thus unennobled, thus empty-handed, he has achieved the glorious title of Apostle of Rome." — CARDINAL NEWMAN: *The Idea of a University*.

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5. Choose some class or type of people, such as the college girl, the grandmother, the country doctor, the teacher, a friend, and write a two or three page exposition of the subject, using the method followed by Newman in the interpretation of *a gentleman*, quoted on pages 103-105.

6. Read over the following pieces of exposition, and be able to tell to what extent they are interpretative: —

"He was exceedingly unlike other people, of course, even then ; his face possessed quite as much beauty as strangeness. Three things were in those days particularly noticeable in the head of Coventry Patmore : the vast, convex brows, arched with vision ; the bright, shrewd, bluish-gray eyes, the outer fold of one eyelid permanently and humorously drooping ; and the willful, sensuous mouth. These three seemed ever at war among themselves. They spoke three different tongues ; they proclaimed a man of dreams, a canny man of business, a man of vehement physical determination. It was the harmony of these in apparently discordant contrast which made the face so fascinating ; the dwellers under the strange mask were three, and the problem was how they contrived the common life. The same incongruity pervaded all the poet's figure ; when at rest, standing or sitting, he was remarkably graceful, falling easily into languid, undulating poses. No sooner did he begin to walk than he became grotesque at once ; the long, thin neck thrust out, the angularity of the limbs emphasized in every rapid, inelegant movement. Sailing along the Parade at Hastings, his hands deep in the pockets of his short, black-velvet jacket, his gray curls escaping from under a broad, soft, wide-awake hat, his long, thin legs, like compasses measuring the miles, his fancy manifestly 'reaching to some great world in ungauged darkness hid,' Coventry Patmore was an apparition never to be forgotten." — EDMUND GOSSE : *Coventry Patmore*.

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"The first frost seems to bring a ripening of summer. The woods break into color, and the sun has a peculiar brooding warmth. But soon comes a night storm, and the next day there is everywhere a new look, a new feeling.

The country is like a face from which, through some hard experience, richness of color has faded, flesh contour fallen away. The reds and yellows are still there, but they do not glow—they are cool, quiet, blending with somber browns and grays. Branches and trunks are thinned of their covering. The sunlight is softer, paler—the shadows fleeting. Summer has been washed away—and what remains is gentle, sad, austere, the beginning of the later autumn."

—ANNA TATUM: *Wellesley College Magazine*.

"It [Rembrandt's *Jacob's Dream*] is full of imagination and grandeur—and yet perfectly Dutch, too, for Jacob is nothing but a Flemish peasant, even to the costume. But those wondrous angels! There are only *two*, and yet they are enough—so dim, and dreamy and majestic they are, and one thinks he can make out hosts of them in that darkling glory behind. It is just a brown heath, with one brown dream of a tree, under which lies a brown Jacob. Everything is brown but the two gray angels, both draped below the feet, and with such soft, such silent wings—yet so full of sweep and sustentation!"

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL: *Letters of James Russell Lowell*.

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"That oak by Derby's is a grand object seen from any side. It stands like an athlete and defies the tempests in every direction. It has not a weak point. It is an agony of strength. Its branches look like stereotyped gray lightning on the sky. But I fear a price is set upon its sturdy trunk and roots, for ship timber, for knees to make stiff the sides of ships against the Atlantic billows. Like an athlete it shows its well-developed muscles."—THOREAU: *Journal*.

"Whenever I take up Emerson's poems I find myself turning automatically to his *Bacchus*. Elsewhere, in detached passages embedded in mediocre verse, he rises for a moment to heights not reached by any other of our poets; but 'Bacchus' is in the grand style throughout. Its texture can bear comparison with the world's best in this kind. In imaginative quality and austere richness of diction, what other verse of our period approaches it? The day Emerson wrote *Bacchus* he had in him, as Michael Drayton said of Marlowe, 'Those brave translucent things that the first poet had.'"

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH: *Ponkapog Papers*.

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"As I stood by the track the other night, Michael, the switchman, was holding the road for the nine o'clock freight, with his faded flag, and his grim brown pipe, and his wooden leg. As it rumbled by him, headlight, clatter, and smoke, and whirl, and halo of the steam, every brakeman backing to the wind, lying on the air, at the jolt of the switch, started, as at some greeting out of the dark, and turned and gave the sign to Michael. All of the brakemen gave it. Then we watched them, Michael and I, out of the roar and the hiss of their splendid cloud, their flickering, swaying bodies against the sky, flying out to the night, until there was nothing but the dull red murmur and the falling of smoke.

"Michael hobbled back to his mansion by the rails. He put up the foot that was left from the wreck, and puffed and puffed. He had been a brakeman himself.

"Brakemen are prosaic men enough, no doubt, in the ordinary sense, but they love a railroad as Shakespeare

loved a sonnet. It is not given to brakemen, as it is to poets, to show to the world as it passes by that their ideals are beautiful. They give their lives for them,—hundreds of lives a year. These lives may be sordid lives looked at from the outside, but mystery, danger, surprise, dark cities, and glistening lights, roar, dust, and water, and death, and life,—these play their endless spell upon them. They love the shining of the track. It is wrought into the very fiber of their being.

“Years pass and years, and still more years. Who shall persuade brakemen to leave the track? They never leave it. I shall always see them—on their flying footboards beneath the sky—swaying and rocking—still swaying and rocking, on to eternity.”

—GERALD STANLEY LEE: “The Poetry of a Machine Age.” *The Atlantic Monthly*.

The Gleaners : —

“Those three similar weary women, all with eyes bent earthward, two stooping, one half-upright, seem to typify the past, the present, and the future of one whose life is just to stoop, to rise, to stoop again—with only a heavier burden for her pains. I must have been in a restless mood when the fateful monotony of it pleased me, not so far along, surely, in my slow journey after the reapers, with earth-bound eye and bended back.”

“Beneath my tremulous hand the monster is alert and docile ; and on either side of the road the cornfields flow peacefully onward, true rivers of green. The time has now come to try the power of esoteric action. I touch the magical handles. The fairy horse obeys. It stops abruptly—one short moan, and its life has all ebbed away. It is now nothing more than a vast, inert mass of metal. How to

resuscitate it? I descend, and eagerly inspect the corpse. The plains, whose submissive immensity I have been braving, begin to contemplate revenge. Now that I have ceased to move, they fling themselves further and wider around me. The blue distance seems to recede, the sky to recoil. I am lost among the impassable cornfields, whose myriad heads press forward, whispering softly, craning to see what I am proposing to do; while the poppies, in the midst of the undulating crowd, nod their red caps and burst into thousandfold laughter. But no matter, my recent science is sure of itself. The hippogriff revives, gives its first snort of life, and then departs once more, singing its song. I reconquer the plains, which again bow down before me. I give a slow turn to the mysterious 'advance ignition' lever, and regulate carefully the admission of the petrol. The pace grows faster and faster; the delirious wheels cry aloud in their gladness. And at first the road comes moving toward me, like a bride waving palms, rhythmically keeping time to some joyous melody. But soon it grows frantic, springs forward, and throws itself madly upon me, rushing under the car like a furious torrent, whose foam lashes my face; it drowns me beneath its waves, it blinds me with its breath. Oh, that wonderful breath! It is as though wings, as though myriad wings no eye can see, transparent wings of great supernatural birds that have their homes on invisible mountains swept by eternal snow, have come to refresh my eyes and my brow with their overwhelming fragrance! Now the road drops sheer into the abyss, and the magical carriage rushes ahead of it. The trees, that for so many slow-moving years have serenely dwelt on its borders, shrink back in dread of disaster. They seem to be hastening one to the other, to approach their green heads, and in startled groups

to debate how to bar the way of the strange apparition. But as this rushes onward, they take panic, and scatter and fly, each one quickly seeking its own habitual place ; and as I pass they bend tumultuously forward, and their myriad leaves, quick to the mad joy of the force that is chanting its hymn, murmur in my ears the voluble psalm of Space, acclaiming and greeting the enemy that hitherto has always been conquered, but now at last triumphs : Speed."

— MAURICE MAETERLINCK, *The Double Garden*.

Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos.

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"*Philistine* must have originally meant, in the minds of those who invented the nickname, a strong, dogged, unenlightened opponent of the chosen people, of the children of the light. The party of change, the would-be remodelers of the old traditional European order, the invokers of reason against custom, the representatives of the modern spirit in every sphere where it is applicable, regarded themselves, with the robust self-confidence natural to reformers as a chosen people, as children of the light. They regarded their adversaries as humdrum people, slaves to routine, enemies to light ; stupid and oppressive, but at the same time very strong. This explains the love which Heine, that Paladin of the modern spirit, has for France ; it explains the preference which he gives to France over Germany. 'The French,' he says, 'are the chosen people of the new religion, its first gospels and dogmas have been drawn up in their language ; Paris is the new Jerusalem, and the Rhine is the Jordan which divides the consecrated land of freedom from the land of the Philistines.' He means that the French, as a people, have shown more accessibility to ideas than any other people ; that prescription and routine have had less



hold upon them than upon any other people ; that they have shown most readiness to move and to alter at the bidding (real or supposed) of reason. This explains, too, the detestation which Heine had for the English: 'I might settle in England,' he says, in his exile, 'if it were not that I should find there two things, coal-smoke and Englishmen ; I cannot abide either.' What he hated in the English was the 'ächt-britische Beschränktheit,' as he calls it,—the *genuine British narrowness*. In truth, the English, profoundly as they have modified the old Middle-Age order, great as is the liberty which they have secured for themselves, have in all their changes proceeded, to use a familiar expression, by the rule of thumb ; what was intolerably inconvenient to them they have suppressed, and as they have suppressed it not because it was irrational, but because it was practically inconvenient, they have seldom in suppressing it appealed to reason, but always, if possible, to some precedent, or form, or letter, which served as a convenient instrument for their purpose, and which saved them from the necessity of recurring to general principles. They have thus become, in a certain sense, of all people the most inaccessible to ideas and the most impatient of them, because they have got on so well without them, that they despise those who, not having got on as well as themselves, still make a fuss for what they themselves have done so well without. But there has certainly followed from hence, in this country, somewhat of a general depression of pure intelligence : Philistia has come to be thought by us the true Land of Promise, and it is anything but that ; the born lover of ideas, the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country that the sky over his head is of brass and iron. The enthusiast for the idea, for reason, values

reason, the idea, in and for themselves; he values them irrespectively of the practical conveniences which their triumph may obtain for him; and the man who regards the possession of these practical conveniences as something sufficient in itself, something which compensates for the absence or surrender of the idea, of reason, is, in his eyes, a Philistine. This is why Heine so often and so mercilessly attacks the liberals; much as he hates conservatism, he hates Philistinism even more, and whoever attacks conservatism itself ignobly, not as a child of light, not in the name of the idea, is a Philistine. Our Cobbett is thus for him, much as he disliked our clergy and aristocracy whom Cobbett attacked, a Philistine with six fingers on every hand, and on every foot six toes, four-and-twenty in number: a Philistine, the staff of whose spear is like a weaver's beam."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Essays in Criticism*.

7. Write five short interpretative studies; for example, an interpretation of a person, a face, a line of poetry, a place, etc.

8. What is the abstract idea conveyed by the following paragraph?

"When but a schoolgirl it had occurred to her one day in the Ancient History class to wonder if the Christian religion, too, might not be a myth. Some years later, when looking over the ship's side watching the snowflakes melt in the dark water, she had been oppressed with a sense of the soul's Nirvana. As she sat in church one Easter Sunday, and saw a beautiful child taken up for baptism, and remembered the mother who had died at its birth, she had a new conception of the resurrection of the body. At her aged grandfather's birthday festival, the sight of his sons and

daughters and their children doing the old man honor had touched and satisfied her, and she had told herself that there was no other immortality for man than posterity. But when she stood beside the grave of the younger sister, whose life had been part of her life, her faith was as unquestioning as in the sweet old Now-I-lay-me-down-to-sleep days of childhood, and somewhere up above the blue sky, there was for her a heaven where God might be, but where surely the mother who had taught her so, waited to welcome her children."

9. Develop an abstract idea in concrete terms.

## INTERPRETATIVE PRESENTATION

WE have considered exposition in which presentation of facts was the main purpose. We have considered exposition by means of direct interpretation or interpretation confirmed by presentation of facts. We have now to consider that branch of exposition whose purpose is interpretation, but whose method is entirely or mainly presentation. In this concrete criticism, as it is called, the interpretation is implied rather than expressed. The writer does not, or at least need not, declare the inferences to be drawn from the facts presented. They are so presented as to speak for themselves, as to lead the reader inevitably to the writer's conclusion. At its best, this sort of exposition is scarcely distinguishable from pure description or pure narration; the details are so convincingly presented that the resulting impression seems independent of any conscious purpose on the author's part. The following paragraph from Walter Pater's *Marius* is a case in point:—

“The resting-place to which he presently came, in the keen, wholesome air of the market-place of the little hill-town, was a pleasant contrast to that last effort of his journey. The room in which he sat down to supper, unlike the ordinary Roman inns at that day, was trim and sweet. The fire-

light danced cheerfully upon the polished, three-wicked *lucernæ* burning clearly with the best oil, upon the white-washed walls, and the bunches of scarlet carnations set in glass goblets. The white wine of the place put before him, of the true color and flavor of the grape, and with a ring of delicate foam as it mounted in the cup, had a reviving edge or freshness he had found in no other wine. These things had relieved a little the melancholy of the hour before; and it was just then that he heard the voice of one, newly arrived at the inn, making his way to the upper floor — a youthful voice, with a reassuring clearness of note — which completed his cure."

Pater's purpose here was evidently not to give a picture of the room, but rather to give the impression of tonic cheerfulness it imparted. He has gained this end, not by insisting on the effect of the cleanliness and the cheerfulness of the room, but by selecting exactly those details most suggestive of exquisite neatness, freshness, and tone — the dancing firelight, the clear flame of the lamp, the polished metal, the whitewashed walls, the glass goblets, the scarlet carnations, the ring of foam, the flavor of the white wine, the youthful voice. He has contrived to make his reader feel, as well as understand, that the atmosphere of the room was bracing.

Sometimes the writer gives the details with slight exaggeration or with noticeable insistence, in order to make his expository purpose unmistakably evident. Again he may not leave the details presented to

speak for themselves; he forces you to get his idea of the subject, not only through its sensible attributes, but through those attributes and such interpretative comment as will give the precise suggestion he wishes them to have. This is true of Dickens's description of Mr. Gradgrind in *Hard Times*:—

“The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard-set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was,—all helped the emphasis.”

The details given here do not necessarily imply what Dickens by his comments makes them signify: a broad brow is here made to suggest a wall—the same feature prompted Lowell to call Emerson “our broad-browed poet”; deep-set eyes must be tortured

into a contribution to the hard-fact idea the whole picture is intended to convey. This piece of work corresponds to caricature in painting — it distorts the fact the more effectively to convey the impression. The same method may be applied to a building, a landscape, a city, what not? A few pages beyond the description quoted above from *Hard Times* Dickens applies this method to a more complex subject and gives a description of a town similar in character to his caricature of Mr. Gradgrind. His object here is to give an impression of sordid monotony, but such direct interpretation as he employs has reference, not to the whole town, but to the special features of it that he includes in his presentation :—

“It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it ; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of buildings full of windows, where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work,

and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last year and the next."

The following sketch is interpretative presentation applied to a process : —

"Let me describe to you, very briefly, a newspaper day. Figure first, then, a hastily erected and still more hastily designed building in a dirty, paper-littered back street of old London, and a number of shabbily dressed men coming and going in this with projectile swiftness, and within this factory companies of printers, tensely active with nimble fingers — they were always speeding up the printers — ply their type-setting machines, and cast and arrange masses of metal in a sort of kitchen inferno, above which, in a beehive of little brightly lit rooms, disheveled men sit and scribble. There is a throbbing of telephones and a clicking of telegraph needles, a rushing of messengers, a running to and fro of heated men, clutching proofs and copy. Then begins a clatter and roar of machinery catching the infection, going faster and faster and whizzing and banging, — engineers, who have never had time to wash since their birth, flying about with oil cans, while paper runs off its rolls with a shudder of haste. The proprietor you must suppose arriving explosively on a swift motor-car, leaping out before the thing is at a standstill, with letters and documents clutched in his hand, rushing in, resolute to 'hustle,' getting wonderfully in everybody's way. At the sight of him, even the messenger boys who are waiting, get up and scamper to and fro. Sprinkle your vision with collisions, curses, incoherencies. You imagine all the parts of this complex lunatic machine working hysterically toward a crescendo of haste and excite-



ment as the night wears on. At last the only things that seem to travel slowly in all those tearing, vibrating premises are the hands of the clock.

“Slowly things draw on toward publication, the consummation of all those stresses. Then in the small hours, into the now dark and deserted streets comes a wild whirl of carts and men, the place spurts paper at every door, bales, heaps, torrents of papers, that are snatched and flung about in what looks like a free fight, and off with a rush and clatter east, west, north, and south. The interest passes outwardly; the men from the little rooms are going homeward, the printers disperse yawning, the roaring presses slacken. The paper exists. Distribution follows manufacture, and we follow the bundles. Our vision becomes a vision of dispersal. You see those bundles hurling into stations, catching trains by a hair’s breadth, speeding on their way, breaking up, smaller bundles of them hurled with a fierce accuracy out upon the platforms that rush by, and then everywhere a division of these smaller bundles into still smaller bundles, into dispersing parcels, into separate papers, and the dawn happens unnoticed amidst a great running and shouting of boys, a shoving through letter slots, openings of windows, spreading out upon book-stalls. For the space of a few hours you must figure the whole country dotted white with rustling papers — placards everywhere vociferating the hurried lie for the day; men and women in trains, men and women eating and reading, men by study-fenders, people sitting up in bed, mothers and sons and daughters waiting for father to finish — a million scattered people reading — reading headlong — or feverishly ready to read. It is just as if some vehement jet had sprayed that white foam of papers over the surface of the land. . . .

“And then you know, wonderfully gone — gone utterly, vanished as foam might vanish upon the sand.”

— H. G. WELLS : *In the Days of the Comet*.

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Narration used for the purpose of interpretation is perhaps the most common form of interpretative presentation. That “Truth embodied in a tale will enter in at lowly doors” seems to have been very generally realized. The parables in the Bible are of this character. Fables come under this category. Mrs. Stowe, wishing to write of the wrongs of negro slavery, and Mr. Sinclair, wishing to bring before the public the wrongs of the modern labor system, did not write treatises to accomplish their purpose; they selected typical wrongs and put them together in story form as coming within the experience of an individual. *Black Beauty* is exposition of the same sort, showing the prevailing cruelty to animals in general by making one animal suffer the most objectionable forms of neglect and cruelty. A college girl, after studying up the George Junior Republic with the view of writing a formal exposition on that subject, chose instead the indirect method. She presented a fictitious character, a boy to whom she gave the part and the character of the typical citizen of the Junior Republic and carried him through his entrance to the Republic, his rebellion, his being won to confidence in the leader, his going to work, his industrial progress, his offenses,

his punishment, education, election to important offices, and so on, till she had shown vividly through his experience the spirit and the working of the institution. Jane Andrews's *Seven Little Sisters* and *Ten Boys*, and Ernest Thompson Seton's animal stories are of this class. These and the innumerable "biographies" of rain drops, grains of sand, pins, etc., show how the method of concrete criticism may be made to serve unimpassioned didactic ends.

This type of writing has its value, but usually has faults. It is apt to be overcrowded. In order to be comprehensive, a piling up of experience in a single history is resorted to that gives a false idea of life or irritates the reader with a sense that the author is not presenting the material as it is or would be, but is manipulating it to produce an effect. In the *Atlantic Monthly* for August, 1906, there is an article which purports to be virtually a transcript of a sermon delivered by a colored preacher. The reader is left to draw his own inferences about it. Any sense that this sermon was not genuine, that it was a cleverly invented typical sermon, or that there had been important omissions or changes for the purpose of bringing the reader to the writer's conclusions, would entirely destroy the effect of the article. To be strong, concrete criticism must be convincing; it must have the air of fact presented by an impartial observer.

While the student should be able to distinguish

between the various methods of exposition, he should not have the idea that they should in practice be kept distinct. The various methods are, in fact, most effectively used in conjunction. Presentation for the sake of interpretation may be used together with presentation for the sake of graphic impression. Take, for example, Mr. Upton Sinclair's description of the heroine of *The Jungle*:—

"She stood in the doorway shepherded by cousin Marija, breathless from pushing through the crowd, and in her happiness painful to look upon. There was a light of wonder in her eyes and her lids trembled, and her otherwise wan little face was flushed. She wore a muslin dress, conspicuously white, and a stiff little veil coming to her shoulders. There were five pink paper roses twisted in the veil, and eleven bright green rose leaves. There were white cotton gloves upon her hands, and as she stood staring about her she twisted them together feverishly."

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There is much pathos in the "five pink paper roses" and "eleven bright green rose leaves." Those simple numerals do more to make the reader feel the preciousness and costliness of this bridal array to the little immigrant than would a paragraph of direct explanation.

And just as presentation may aid or take the place of interpretation, interpretation seems at times not only to help out presentation by its appeal to the understanding, but to give a sense impression. It is no

detail of line or color that makes Carinthia, the heroine of George Meredith's *Amazing Marriage*, visible to the mind's eye, but rather those comments and comparisons she suggested to the young naturalist: "a panting look"—"a look of beaten flame: a look of one who has run and at last beholds!"—"From minute to minute she is the rock that loses the sun at night and reddens in the morning."—"A beautiful Gorgon—a haggard Venus." When, in her story *Flittermouse*, Amélie Rives likens the cry of a horse to "the scent of blood turned to sound," we do not ask to know pitch or gamut, or to what in the realm of sound that cry was like.

### EXERCISES

1. In what respect are (a) and (b) alike? How do they differ?

(a) "The personal influence he exerted on the boys who lived in his House was quite as remarkable as his 'form-teaching.' Stoicism and honor were the qualities it was mainly directed to form. Every boy was expected to show manliness and endurance, and to utter no complaint. Where physical health was concerned, he was indulgent; his House was the first which gave the boys meat at breakfast in addition to tea with bread and butter. But otherwise the discipline was Spartan, though not more Spartan than he prescribed to himself, and the House was trained to scorn the slightest approach to luxury. Armchairs were forbidden except to sixth form boys. A pupil relates that when Bowen

found he was in the habit of taking two hot baths a week, the transgression was reproved with the words: 'Oh, boy, that's like the later Romans, boy.' His maxims were: 'Take sweet and bitter as sweet and bitter come,' and 'always play the game.' He never preached to the boys or lectured them; and if he had to convey a reproof, conveyed it in a single sentence. But he dwelt upon honor as the foundation of character, and made every boy feel that he was expected to reach the highest standard of truthfulness, courage, and duty to the little community of the House, or the cricket eleven, or the football team. . . . Bowen attached the utmost value to games as a training in character. He used to descant upon the qualities of discipline, good-fellowship, good-humor, mutual help, and postponement of self, which they are calculated to foster. Though some of his friends thought that his own intense and unabated fondness for these games—for he played cricket and football up to the end of his life—might have biased his judgment, they could not deny that the games ought to develop the qualities aforesaid."

—JAMES BRYCE: "Edward Bowen." *Studies in Contemporary Biography*.

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(b) "Mr. Eglett hereupon threw the door open, and ushered in Master Leo.

"Lady Charlotte noticed that the tutor shook the boy's hand offhandedly, with not a whit of the usual obtrusive geniality, and merely dropped him a word. Soon after, he was talking to Mr. Eglett of games at home and games abroad. . . . The tutor praised fencing as an exercise and an accomplishment. He had large reserves of eulogy for boxing. He knew the qualities of the famous bruisers of the

time, cited fisty names whose owners were then to be seen all over an admiring land in prints, in the glorious defensive-offensive attitude, England's own—Touch me, if you dare! . . .

"The young tutor had lighted on a pet theme of Mr. Eglett's—the excellent virtues of the practice of pugilism in old England, and the school of honor that it is to our lower population. 'Fifty times better for them than cock-fighting,' he exclaimed, admitting that he could be an interested spectator at a ring or the pit: cock-fighting or ratting.

"'Ratting seems to have more excuse,' the tutor said, and made no sign of a liking for either of these popular pastimes. As he disapproved without squeamishness, the impulsive but sharply critical woman close by nodded; and she gave him his due for being no courtier.

"Leo had to be off to bed. The tutor spared him any struggle over the shaking of hands, and saying, 'Good night, Leo,' continued the conversation. The boy went away visibly relieved of the cramp that seizes on a youngster at the formalities pertaining to these chilly and fateful introductions.

"'What do you think of the look of him?' Mr. Eglett asked.

"The tutor had not appeared to inspect the boy. 'Big head,' he remarked. 'Yes, Leo won't want pushing at books when he's once in harness. He will have six weeks of me. It's more than the yeomanry get for drill per annum, and they're expected to know something of a soldier's duties. There's a chance of putting him on the right road in certain matters. We'll walk, or ride, or skate, if the frost holds to-morrow: no lessons the first day.'

"'Do as you think fit,' said Lady Charlotte."

—GEORGE MEREDITH: *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*.

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2. Give in abstract terms the idea conveyed by the following presentation : —

An Ugly Duckling : —

“She is not a pretty morsel of girlish insipidity, but a palpably ugly piece of young womanhood, bounded by long unyielding parallels that break in sharp little angles to form a pair of narrow shoulders, and from the base of the neck spring rigidly upward again to outline a throat and head of prodigious length and sparseness. Her skin is too brown; her hair is impossibly dark and heavy; her eyes are too big and black, her nose and ears challenge attention. When she cuts her meat, she seems all elbows; when she walks, her big feet prevail; when she talks, her great deep voice clangs discords. She is by turns everything too much, yet she makes me see visions sometimes.”

3. Does the picture gain from the comment ?

“Four ducks on a pond,  
A grass-bank beyond,  
A blue sky of spring,  
White clouds on the wing;  
What a little thing  
To remember for years —  
To remember with tears !”

— WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

4. Read the first of the following paragraphs, and write in abstract terms what you think Lafcadio Hearn felt about the city he described. Then read the second paragraph and see whether you received the impression he sought to convey : —

“As I muse, the remembrance of a great city comes back



to me, a city walled up to the sky and roaring like the sea. The memory of that roar returns first ; then the vision defines : a chasm, which is a street, between mountains, which are houses. I am tired, because I have walked many miles between those precipices of masonry, and have trodden no earth, — only slabs of rock, — and have heard nothing but thunder of tumult. Deep below those huge pavements, I know there is a cavernous world tremendous ; systems underlying systems of ways contrived for water and steam and fire. On either hand tower façades pierced by scores of tiers of windows, — cliffs of architecture shutting out the sun. Above, the pale blue streak of sky is cut by a maze of spidery lines, — an infinite cobweb of electric wires. In that block on the right there dwell nine thousand souls ; the tenants of the edifice facing it pay the annual rent of a million dollars. Seven millions scarcely covered the cost of those bulks overshadowing the square beyond, — and there are miles of such. Stairways of steel and cement, of brass and stone, with costliest balustrades, ascend through decades and double decades of stories ; but no foot treads them. By water power, by steam, by electricity, men go up and down ; the heights are too dizzy, the distances too great, for the use of the limbs. My friend, who pays rent of \$5000 for his rooms in the fourteenth story of a monstrosity not far off, has never trodden his stairway. I am walking for curiosity alone ; with a serious purpose I should not walk, — the spaces are too broad, the time is too precious, for such slow exertion, — men travel from district to district, from house to office, by steam. Heights are too great for the voice to traverse ; orders are given and obeyed by machinery. By electricity far-away doors are opened ; with one touch a hundred rooms are lighted or heated.

"And all this enormity is hard, grim, dumb; it is the enormity of mathematical power applied to utilitarian ends of solidity and durability. These leagues of palaces, of warehouses, of business structures, of buildings describable and indescribable are not beautiful, but sinister. One feels depressed by the mere sensation of the enormous life which created them, life without sympathy; of their prodigious manifestation of power, power without pity. They are the architectural utterance of the new industrial age. And there is no halt in the thunder of wheels, in the storming of hoofs and of human feet. To ask a question, one must shout into the ear of the questioned; to see, to understand, to move in that high-pressure medium, needs experience. The unaccustomed feels the sensation of being in a panic, in a tempest, in a cyclone. Yet all this is order."

—LAFCADIO HEARN: *The Genius of Japanese Civilization*.

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5. Read Chapter VIII of *Vanity Fair*, and write a characterization of the Crawley household as you understand it from Becky Sharp's presentation. Write also a characterization of Becky Sharp as she is revealed by this interpretative presentation.

6. Write five brief studies in interpretative presentation.

A SPECIAL APPLICATION OF EX-  
POSITION—LITERARY CRITICISM



## LITERARY CRITICISM

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

CRITICISM of stories, essays, poems, is not essentially different from criticism of pictures, places, characters, events, and so on. In this field we are still engaged in presentation and interpretation. But since literary criticism is a branch of exposition in which students of composition are, as a rule, particularly interested, and by which they may be particularly benefited, it is well to give it special consideration.

The first question to be disposed of is, What sort of book should an inexperienced critic attempt to review? Matthew Arnold defines the function of criticism in general to be "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." The last part of this definition applied here might seem to limit the choice of subjects to excellent books little known or little appreciated. We are, however, at this stage of our work more concerned with learning than with propagating wisdom. Since this is so, and since, in the highest sense, even the second purpose of criticism will be most truly accomplished by the criticism that is rather a giving out than a giving unto, that com-

municates the writer's "sense of fact" about a book without consciousness of the effect it may produce, the chief requirement is, that the book should have made an impression on you, that it should have roused in you ideas and feelings regarding it. Any book that makes you want to talk about it ought to be a promising subject for a review. Whether the book is well known or not matters little; whether you like it or not is of secondary importance. It is not even necessary that the book should be one that you thoroughly understand: you may write an excellent review of a book over which you have complete mastery, which you hold, as it were, in the hollow of your hand and can turn over and about at pleasure; or you may find a book an inspiring subject which makes you feel as *Heroes and Hero-worship* made the young hero of *Beauchamp's Career* feel, that there is a great deal more in the book than there is in yourself. If the book excites in you something you want to express, you have the first essential for a vital criticism. A criticism of even a poor book, written with eager interest, will do more to develop in the writer the power to appreciate a good book, than will the writing of a criticism of a book of great merit that has not interested the critic.

The second question to be considered relates to the substance of criticism. Shall it be chiefly presentation, or interpretation, or shall it be interpreta-

tive-presentation? If we again refer to Matthew Arnold's invaluable essay on *The Function of Criticism*, we may obtain help. He says:—

“And it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it, — but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clew, not as an abstract lawgiver, — that the critic will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, . . . criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let one's self become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong.”

This is wholesome advice from the point of view of the student-critic as well as from that of the reader. The literary criticism, whether thought, spoken, or written, that begins and ends with “I like” or “I don't like” or any loose judgment, can be nothing but futile from any point of view. The critic must show what the particular properties of a piece of work are and to what those properties are due. Presentation there should be, presentation that is not warped and clipped in such a way as to do injustice to the author that the critic may make his point, presentation that is to the point, complete but brief — take, for example, the following passage from John

Burroughs's essay, *Arnold's View of Emerson and Carlyle*: —

“The gist of the speaker's view of Emerson was briefly as follows: Emerson was not a great poet, was not to be ranked among the legitimate poets, because his poetry had not the Miltonic requirements of simplicity, sensuousness, and passion. He was not even a great man of letters, because he had not a genius and instinct for style; his style had not the requisite wholeness of good tissue. Who were the great men of letters? They were Plato, Cicero, Voltaire, La Bruyère, Milton, Addison, Swift, — men whose prose is by a kind of native necessity true and sound. Emerson was not a great philosopher, because he had no constructive talent, — he could not build a system of philosophy. What then was his merit? He was to be classed with Marcus Aurelius, who was ‘the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit.’ This was Emerson's chief merit and service: he was the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit; the secret of his influence was not in his thought — it was in his temper, his unfaltering spirit of cheerfulness and hope.

“In the opinion of the speaker, even Carlyle was not a great writer, and his work was of much less importance than Emerson's. As Wordsworth's poetry was the most important work done in verse in our language during the nineteenth century, so Emerson's essays were, in the lecturer's view, the most important work done in prose. Carlyle was not a great writer, because he was too impatient, too willful, too vehement; he did not work his material up into good literary form.”

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The first paragraph furnishes a good example of



presentation. It states briefly and fairly Arnold's opinion of Emerson as expressed in his essay, *Emerson*. The second, either through haste and negligence or prejudice, is unfair. It does not present Arnold's chief charge against Carlyle.

If the critic takes a fair view of his author, presentation that will influence the reader to reach the same conclusions that he has formed will necessitate no misrepresentation.

I find that the inexperienced critic works to the best advantage when he makes his judgment lead in building up the outline for a criticism—when he chooses his book for criticism because he has some opinion regarding it, and then chooses what he will present from the book with the view of showing the reasonableness of that opinion. His effort must be to make a fair judgment and to justify it by presentation. When he comes to the development of the outline into a finished criticism, he may, if he sees fit, follow the method advocated by Arnold, giving the prominent place to his presentation and letting his comment seem to be a secondary matter.

This, however, is not necessary; good, explicit, judicial criticism is helpful and interesting and often indispensable, and the critic often gains clearness of meaning as well as firmness of structure by stating his opinion. I quote again from Burroughs's *Indoor Studies*, this time from his *Henry D. Thoreau*:—

“Thoreau had humor, but it had worked a little — it was not quite sweet; a vinous fermentation had taken place more or less in it. There was too much acid for the sugar. It shows itself especially when he speaks of men. How he disliked the average social and business man, and said his only resource was to get away from them! He was surprised to find what vulgar fellows they were. ‘They do a little business commonly each day, in order to pay their board, and then congregate in sitting rooms, and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush; and when I think they have sufficiently relaxed, and am prepared to see them steal away to their shrines, they go unashamed to their beds, and take on a new layer of sloth.’ Methinks there is a drop of *aqua fortis* in this liquor. Generally, however, there is only a pleasant acid or subacid flavor to his humor, as when he refers to a certain minister who spoke of God as if he enjoyed a monopoly of the subject; or when he says of the good church-people that ‘they show the whites of their eyes on the Sabbath, and the blacks all the rest of the week.’ He says the greatest bores who visited him in his hut by Walden Pond were the self-styled reformers, who thought that he was forever singing, —

“‘This is the house that I built;

That is the man that lives in the house that I built.’

“But they did not know that the third line was, —

“‘These are the folks that worry the man

That lives in the house that I built.’”

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Notice the generalizations and notice, too, how they give both wholeness and force to the paragraph. Without them we should have mere fragments, disjointed scraps. Then, cull the generalizations, put

them together without the specific instances cited and quoted, and note the loss in force and interest. Both are important, both are necessary, throughout a review.

From the last citation the student will have noted that presentation is possible and desirable in discussing not only content, but style. It is not enough for the student to characterize a writer's style in some general terms as humorous, forcible, elegant. We must show by presentation that our statements are just. Further, we must seek to make more exact judgments, generalizations that will fit the case more closely. We must modify and qualify till we have expressed or implied the precise quality that distinguishes the author for us. We must keep in mind Arnold's caution, "never to let one's self become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying."

When this is done, judgment unaided by presentation is valuable and interesting. Consider the following bits of criticism:—

" . . . with Flaubert, the search, the unwearied research, was not for the smooth, or winsome, or forcible word, as such, as with false Ciceronians, but quite simply and honestly, for the word's adjustment to its meaning."

—WALTER PATER: *Style*.

"Unoccupied, as he [Lamb] might seem, with great matters, he is in immediate contact with what is real, espe-

cially in its caressing littleness, that littleness in which there is much of the whole woeful heart of things, and meets it more than halfway with a perfect understanding of it. What sudden, unexpected touches of pathos in him !—bearing witness how the sorrow of humanity, the *Weltschmerz*, the constant aching of its wounds is ever present with him : but with a gift also for the enjoyment of life in its subtleties, of enjoyment actually refined by the need of some thoughtful economies and making the most of things.”

—WALTER PATER : *Charles Lamb*.

In such passages as these the critic seems, in the literal sense of the word, to *discover* the characteristics of the writer.

Mr. Edmund Gosse wrote of Ibsen's plays :—

“Each of his plays presupposed a long history behind it ; each started, like an ancient Greek tragedy, in the full process of catastrophe.”

Mr. W. M. Daniels, in reviewing Mr. Robert Hunter's *Poverty*, wrote :—

“Worse than all else, for those who value crystal-clear sincerity of thought and utterance, is the recurrence of the more than occasional note of pseudo-pathos and literary falsetto. Self-revelation by carefully motivated indirection, and melodramatically repressed heartbreak, suggest something dangerously near the *poseur*.”

Such general statements are provocative, and stimulate the reader to furnish evidence for or against them ; or their justness is at once perceived and the reader is gratified to find his own ideas confirmed

and concisely and clearly phrased. It is not true that such direct criticism is necessarily didactic in purpose. The following paragraph will be less enjoyed by the person whom it instructs than by the person who has already discovered the facts for himself:—

“If we grant that he is not master of the larger units of style, that is, of construction, we can assert that in the lesser units, sentence for sentence, he is a fine writer of the English tongue. There is a story that he learned English first from the Bible, and his vigorous primal usages of words, his racial idioms and ancient rich metaphors warrant the idea that he came to us along the old broad highway of English speech and thought, the King James Version. His sentences, however, are not biblical as Stevenson’s and Kipling’s often are, but show a modern sophistication and intellectual deliberateness. . . . Approaching our language as an adult foreigner, he goes deep to the derivative meanings of words, their powerful first intentions, which familiarity has disguised from most of us native-born to English. He has achieved that ring and fluency which he has declared should be the artist’s aim.”

—JOHN ALBERT MACY: “Joseph Conrad.” *The Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1906.

The critic’s method need not, however, be so direct and explicit. He may suggest by figurative language the effect of the writer’s work, as when Hazlitt said of Burke that many of his passages shine by their own light; as when De Quincey spoke of Lamb’s “pensiveness checkered by gleams of the fanciful, and the

humor that is touched with cross lights of pathos"; or when Matthew Arnold said of Byron that Nature sometimes seemed to take the pen from him and write for him.

This method is often used on a larger scale. Take, for example, Thoreau's description of Carlyle's style:—

"Such a style, — so diversified and variegated ! It is like the face of a country ; it is like a New England landscape, with farmhouses and villages, and cultivated spots, and belts of forests and blueberry-swamps round about, with the fragrance of shad blossoms and violets on certain winds. And as for the reading of it, it is novel enough to the reader who has used only the diligence, and old line mail coach. It is like traveling sometimes on foot, sometimes in a gig tandem ; sometimes in a full coach, over highways, mended and unmended, for which you will prosecute the town ; on level roads, through French departments, by Simplon roads over the Alps, and now and then he hauls up for a relay, and yokes in an unbroken colt of a Pegasus for a leader, driving off by cart-paths, and across lots, by corduroy roads and gridiron bridges ; and where the bridges are gone, not even a string-piece left, and the reader has to set his breast and swim. You have got an expert driver this time, one who has driven ten thousand miles, and was never known to upset ; can drive six in hand on the edge of a precipice, and touch the leaders anywhere with his snapper."

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We find another interesting, figurative, characterization of Carlyle's style in *Beauchamp's Career*, where

Meredith gives some vivid sentences descriptive of the effect of *Heroes and Hero-worship* on one of the characters of his story : —

“A wind-in-the-orchard style, that tumbled down here and there an appreciable fruit with uncouth bluster ; sentences without commencements running to abrupt endings and smoke, like waves against a sea wall, learned dictionary words giving a hand to street slang, and accents falling on them haphazard, like slant rays from driving clouds ; all the pages in a breeze, the whole book producing a kind of electrical agitation in the mind and joints.”

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Either method is good in proportion as it is true. The temptation in figurative criticism is to let the figure have its own way too much. We start with a figure that is sufficiently prompted by the subject under discussion, but before we know it our figure is more important to us than the idea it was intended to express. Truth should never be sacrificed to effectiveness.

It is well to prepare the way for the figurative criticism by direct statement of opinion. In the following lines on Johnson, Hazlitt makes perfectly clear the force of his closing comparison : —

“All his periods are cast in the same mold, are of the same size and shape, and consequently have little fitness to the variety of things he professes to treat of. His subjects are familiar, but the author is always upon stilts. He has neither ease nor simplicity, and his efforts at playfulness, in part, remind one of the lines in Milton : —

“ . . . the elephant  
To make them sport wreath'd his proboscis lithe.’ ”

The point of Goldsmith's famous comment on Johnson: “If he were to write a fable of little fishes he would make them speak like great whales,” is perhaps obvious enough to be grasped without assistance even by those who know nothing of Johnson's style. The direct statement, where it is necessary, should be given before the figurative criticism.

Criticism of structure and diction is the more worth while for being definite and confirmed by specific instances. That an essay or a story is loosely constructed and contains material that does not contribute to the central idea, etc., is too vague a criticism to convince the doubtful or satisfy the curious. In Matthew Arnold's review of *Anna Karénina* he presents not only his conclusions, but some of the facts on which they are based:—

“There are many characters in *Anna Karénina*—too many, if we look in it for a work of art in which the action shall be vigorously one, and to that one action everything shall converge. There are two main actions extending throughout the book, and we keep passing from one of them to the other—from the affairs of Anna and Wronsky to the affairs of Kitty and Levine. People appear in connection with these two main actions whose appearance and proceedings do not in the least contribute to develop them; incidents are multiplied which we expect are to lead to something important, but which do not. What, for instance,



does the episode of Kitty's friend, Warinka, and Levine's brother, Serge Ivanitch, their inclination for one another and its failure to come to anything, contribute to the development of either the character or the fortunes of Kitty and Levine? What does the incident of Levine's long delay in getting to church to be married, a delay which, as we read it, seems to have significance, really import? It turns out to import absolutely nothing, and to be introduced solely to give the author the pleasure of telling us that all Levine's shirts had been packed up.

"But the truth is, we are not to take *Anna Karénina* as a work of art; we are to take it as a piece of life. A piece of life it is. The author has not invented and combined it, he has seen it; it has all happened before his inward eye, and it was in this wise that it happened. Levine's shirts were packed up, and he was late for his wedding in consequence; Warinka and Serge Ivanitch met at Levine's country-house and went out walking together; Serge was very near proposing, but did not. The author saw it all happening so—saw it, and therefore relates it; and what his novel in this way loses in art, it gains in reality."

We have seen that, in character, criticism should be fair, definite, and, as it were, indigenous to the work in question. We have now to consider the tone of a piece of literary criticism. If we take for our pattern critic the critic described and implied by Walter Pater and Matthew Arnold, we shall have one independent of personal considerations, one who will judge every piece of work on its own merits, without regard for the merit of the writer's other

work, uninfluenced by the opinions of other critics—one who will hold high standards of excellence, and will not be prone to praise mediocrity; one who is discriminating, not given to sweeping generalizations and wholesale laudation or condemnation, but one who will be keen and wary, not inclined to condone a fault in one direction for a virtue in another, or ignore an excellence of one sort because of a fault of another; one who does not miss a fine idea because of bungling phrasing, but one who is no less aware of the bungling phrasing because of the fine idea.

While the ardent appreciator who sweeps the ordinary reader along on the full tide of his enthusiasm to the realization of a strength and charm in a writer, which, without the help of a mediator he would not discern, is the more popular critic, his power is scarcely to be imparted, and perfervid imitations of his style are objectionable. The more scholarly critic is the safest model, and in so far as the student critic is conscious of any effort, it should be away from the emotional toward the clear, unimpassioned judgment of a book.

It is well to bear in mind that excessive adulation or blame of a book or an article defeats its end. If what we say is to have effect, it must be of such nature as to inspire faith in our power to judge. If we allow ourselves to indulge in extravagant forms of speech, we shall find our words discounted. We

know that though a jews-harp will please the inexperienced boy, it is a pretty poor instrument from the point of view of one who has heard the violin ; and if we hear a youthful critic lavishing superlatives on a book we are unacquainted with, we are a little apt to believe that he is pleased because he knows nothing better, to attribute the remarkable effect of the book to the simplicity of the critic's taste rather than to the absolute savor of the book.

It is necessary in criticism to keep some standard of values. Two girls in a class in criticism chose to review the same writer, an exquisite essayist. One of them found fault with the writer for wanting some of the virtues of Shakespeare; the other praised the essayist as being superior, in certain particulars, to Holmes, Lowell, and writers of that class. The first thought she had proved her writer of little value. In reality, her blame, had it been discriminating, would have been higher praise than the second writer's approval, for a quantity that we designate as less than a thousand is usually higher than one we characterize as more than a hundred, and to count a writer comparable with, even though below, Shakespeare, is to honor him more conspicuously than to give him high rank in a lower class. In the lecture on Emerson already referred to, Arnold said : "The *English Traits* are, beyond question, very pleasant reading. It is easy to praise them. But I insist on

always trying Emerson's work by the highest standards. I esteem his work too much to try his work by any other. Tried by the highest standards, and compared with the work of the excellent markers and recorders of the traits of human life,—of writers like Montaigne, La Bruyère, Addison,—the *English Traits* will not stand the comparison." More important than the want of effect on the reader, is the effect on the writer of careless commendation or censure; it blunts the critical faculty, and lowers the standards of those who habitually practice it.

To say that the critic must have high standards does not mean that he will quarrel with every author for not being a Shakespeare. It means, however, that he will not give to lesser writers the same degree of praise that belongs to writers of the highest class. He will recognize and appreciate writers of varying degrees of power, but in his judgment of them he will never confuse one with the other. He will not lose sight of his standard; he will appreciate every approach towards it, award to each writer the commendation appropriate to his merit,—and no more.

It is not supposable that the student-critic has, in all cases, correct standards; such standards imply wide reading of good literature, and will be modified as the student develops. The great point is that the beginner should be true to his sense of excellence. He should bear in mind that while excessive praise is

fatuous, insincere faultfinding is worse. A spirit of sound, youthful enthusiasm, so long as it is sustained by definiteness of statement and apt presentation, is greatly to be preferred to pointless or misdirected moderation or censure — to “cold reservations and incredulities,” as George Eliot expressed it, “put forth to save the critic’s credit for wisdom.”

### EXERCISES

1. Give the purpose and the method of each of the following paragraphs of criticism : —

(a) “Other poets have held their mirrors up to nature, mirrors that differ very widely in the truth and beauty of the images they reflect; but Spenser’s is a magic glass in which we see few shadows cast back from actual life, but visionary shapes conjured up by the wizard’s art from some confusedly remembered past or some impossible future; it is like one of those still pools of mediæval legend which covers some sunken city of the antique world; a reservoir in which all our dreams seem to have been gathered. As we float upon it, we see that it pictures faithfully enough the summer-clouds that drift over it, the trees that grow about its margin, but in the midst of these shadowy echoes of actuality we catch faint tones of bells that seem blown to us from beyond the horizon of time, and looking down into the clear depths, catch glimpses of towers and far-shining knights and peerless dames that waver and are gone. Is it a world that ever was, or shall be, or can be, or but a delusion?” — JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL: *Spenser*.

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(b) “Writers who have paid particular attention to style

have often been accused of caring little *what* they say, knowing how beautifully they can say anything. The accusation has generally been unjust : as if any fine beauty could be but skin-deep ! The merit which, more than any other, distinguishes Pater's prose, though it is not the merit most on the surface, is the attention to, the perfection of, the ensemble, under the soft and musical phrases an inexorable logic hides itself, sometimes only too well. Link is added silently, but faultlessly, to link ; the argument marches, carrying you with it, while you fancy you are only listening to the music with which it keeps step. Take an essay to pieces, and you will find that it is constructed with mathematical precision ; every piece can be taken out and replaced in order. I do not know any contemporary writer who observes the logical requirements so scrupulously, who conducts an argument so steadily from deliberate point to point toward a determined goal."

— ARTHUR SYMONS : *Studies in Prose and Verse*.

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(c) "Macaulay's 'party-spirit' is another consequence of his positiveness. When he inclines to a side, he inclines to it too much. His opinions are a shade too strong ; his predilections some degrees at least too warm. William is too perfect, James too imperfect. The Whigs are a trifle like angels ; the Tories like, let us say, 'our inferiors.' Yet this is evidently an honest party-spirit. It does not lurk in the corners of sentences, it is not insinuated without being alleged ; it does not, like the unfairness of Hume, secrete itself so subtly in the turns of the words, that when you look to prove it, it is gone. On the contrary, it rushes into broad day. William is loaded with panegyric ; James is always spoken evil of. Hume's is the artful pleading of a

hired advocate; Macaulay's the bold eulogy of a sincere friend. As far as effect goes, this is an error. The very earnestness of the affection leads to a reaction; we are tired of having William called the 'just'; we cannot believe so many pages; 'all that' can scarcely be correct."

— WALTER BAGEHOT: *Estimates of Englishmen and Scotchmen*.

(d) "Tennyson is rightly considered the most perfect artist among nineteenth-century English poets. But this is not merely because his verse is rich and musical: it is because his work is also true, even the smallest details. You remember that beautiful bit in Maud: —

"Her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy?"

If an American poet had written that about an American girl, it would have been sentimental nonsense. Why? Because the American daisy is all white and yellow. There is nothing rosy about it. But the English daisy is really pink on the under side of its petals, so when Maud crossed the field she really left her footprints marked in rose-color in the upturned flowers where she had trodden."

— HENRY VAN DYKE. From Dye's *Letters and Letter Writing*.

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(e) "It is this vision of the eternally romantic in the unflinchingly real that is the mark of Mr. Kipling's genius. Look at his most popular piece, for instance, which sets out to be a comic remonstrance addressed by Tommy Atkins to his inappreciative countrymen: who can fail to see that what has imprinted it on every one's memory is the note of romance so skillfully inwoven in the refrain? Take a single

stanza, and observe how the grimy commonplace of the first four lines is lifted into a new significance by contrast with the vision of the sea and the great troopships :—

“ ‘ I went into a theater as sober as could be,  
They gave a drunk civilian room, but ’adn’t none for me ;  
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-’alls,  
But when it comes to fightin’, Lord ! they’ll shove me in the stalls !

“ ‘ For it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ “ Tommy, wait outside ” ;  
But it’s “ special train for Atkins ” when the trooper’s on the tide,  
When the troopship’s on the tide, my boys, when the troopship’s  
on the tide,  
O, it’s “ special train for Atkins ” when the trooper’s on the tide.’

“ Each of these different refrains is an inspiration :—

“ ‘ O, it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ “ Tommy, go away ” ;  
But it’s “ Thank you, Mister Atkins ” when the band begins to  
play . . .

Then it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ “ Tommy, ’ow’s yer  
soul ? ”

But it’s “ Thin red lines of ’eroes ” when the drums begin to  
roll . . .

For it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ “ chuck him out, the  
brute ! ”

But it’s “ Saviour of ’is country ” when the guns begin to shoot . . . ’

“ Even in the less good—the more commonplace—of the Barrack-Room Ballads, we find a sense of vastness and a sense of sadness underlying the grotesque exterior, that are new in patriotic verse. For instance,” etc.

— WILLIAM ARCHER : *Poets of the Younger Generation*.

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2. Discuss the tone of the following paragraphs of criticism :—

(a) “ All through his [Lowell’s] early poems runs the thread of a fine morality, the perception of the highest obligations



of religion and philanthropy, the subtle distinction of the purest Christianity, the defense of the weak and oppressed, the succor of the poor; in fine, the creed of a practical religion which required its adherent to go into the slums and out on the highways to carry out his convictions in acts. In the warfare he waged on slavery when the anti-slavery cause was very unpopular, and, in the case of Garrison and others, brought on its advocates continual danger and occasional violence, Lowell was unsparing in his denunciation of the national sin."

—WILLIAM JAMES STILLMAN: *The Autobiography of a Journalist*.

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(b) "Although ill-temper has evidently engendered this 'Fable,' it is by no means a satire throughout. Much of it is devoted to panegyric—but our readers would be quite puzzled to know the grounds of the author's laudations in many cases, unless made acquainted with a fact which we think it as well they should be informed of at once. Mr. Lowell is one of the most rabid of the abolition fanatics; and no Southerner who does not wish to be insulted, and at the same time revolted, by a bigotry the most obstinately blind and deaf, should ever touch a volume by this author. His fanaticism about slavery is a mere local outbreak of the same innate wrong-headedness which, if he owned slaves, would manifest itself in atrocious ill-treatment of them, with murder of any abolitionist who should endeavor to set them free. A fanatic of Mr. L.'s species is simply a fanatic for the sake of fanaticism, and *must* be a fanatic in whatever circumstance you place him.

"His prejudices on the topic of slavery break out everywhere in his present book. Mr. L. has not the common

honesty to speak well, even in a literary sense, of any man who is not a ranting abolitionist. With the exception of Mr. Poe (who has written some commendatory criticism on his poems) no Southerner is mentioned *at all* in this 'Fable.' It is the fashion among Mr. Lowell's set to affect a belief that there is *no such thing* as Southern Literature."

—EDGAR ALLAN POE: *James Russell Lowell*.

(c) "Among the minor poems in this collection is 'The Forsaken,' so widely known and so universally admired. The popular as well as the critical voice ranks it as the most beautiful ballad of its kind ever written.

"We have read this little poem more than twenty times, and always with increasing admiration. *It is inexpressibly beautiful*. No one of real feeling can peruse it without a strong inclination to tears. Its irresistible charm is its absolute truth—the unaffected naturalness of its thought. The sentiment which forms the basis of the composition is, perhaps, at once the most universal and the most passionate of sentiments. No human being exists, over the age of fifteen, who has not, in his heart of hearts, a ready echo for all there so pathetically expressed. The essential poetry of the ideas would only be impaired by 'foreign ornament.' This is a case in which we should be repelled by the mere conventionalities of the muse. We demand, for such thoughts, the most rigorous simplicity at all points. It will be observed that, strictly speaking, there is not an attempt at 'imagery' in the whole poem. All is direct, terse, penetrating. In a word, nothing could be better done. The versification, while in full keeping with the general character of simplicity, has, in certain passages, a vigorous, trenchant euphony, which would confer honor on the most accomplished masters of the art. We refer especially to the lines:—

“‘And follow me to my long home  
*Solemn and slow.*’

And the quatrain —

“‘Could I but know when I am sleeping  
*Low in the ground*  
One faithful heart would there be keeping  
*Watch all night round.*’

“The initial trochee here, in each instance, substituted for the iambus, produces, so naturally as to seem accidental, a very effective echo of sound to sense. The thought included in the line, ‘And *light* the tomb,’ should be dwelt upon to be appreciated in its full extent of beauty ; and the verses which I have italicized in the last stanza are poetry — poetry in the purest sense of that much misused word. They have power — indisputable power ; making us thrill with a sense of their weird magnificence as we read them.”

— EDGAR ALLAN POE : *Estelle Ann Lewis*.

(*d*) “He is one of the foremost story-tellers of the world, with the gift of swift narrative, with the certain grasp of human nature, with a rare power of presenting character at a passionate crisis. There is not in the fiction of our language and of our country anything finer of its kind than any one of half a dozen chapters in *Tom Sawyer*, in *Huckleberry Finn*, in *Pudd’nhead Wilson*.

“Partly because his fiction is uneven, and is never long sustained at its highest level of excellence, partly because he has also written too much that is little better than burlesque and extravaganza, but chiefly because he is primarily a humorist, because he is free from cant and sham pathos, because he does not take himself too seriously, because his humor is free, flowing, unfailing, because his laughter is robust, contagious, and irresistible, because he has made more

of our scattered English-speaking people laugh than any other man of our time — because of all of these things we do not see that in all fiction, since the single footprint on the shore fell under the eyes of the frightened Crusoe, there is no more thrilling moment than when the hand of Indian Joe (his one enemy) comes slowly within the vision of Tom Sawyer, lost in the cave ; we do not see that no one of our American novelists has ever shown more insight into the springs of human action or more dramatic force than is revealed in Huck Finn's account of the Shepherdson-Grangerford feud, and of the attempt to lynch Colonel Sherburn ; we do not see that it would be hard to select from all the story-tellers of the nineteenth century a scene of immeasurable pathos surpassing that in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* when the wretched Chambers knowingly sells his own mother 'down the river.' ”

— BRANDER MATTHEWS: *Aspects of Fiction and other Ventures in Criticism.*

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(e) “O, mighty poet! [Shakespeare] Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art ; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers, — like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be none too much or too little, nothing useless or inert, — but that, the further we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident.”

DE QUINCEY : *Macbeth.*

3. *a.* In the following paragraph on the spontaneity of Mme. de Sévigné's style, what larger question is introduced? Is the unity of the paragraph violated? Give reason for your answer.

"The style of Mme. de Sévigné has been so often and so intelligently judged, analyzed, admired, that it would be difficult to-day to find eulogy both novel and suitable to apply to it; on the other hand, I do not find myself disposed to revive a worn-out topic by caviling criticism. A single observation will suffice; it is that we may connect the grand and beautiful styles of the Louis XIV. period with two different systems, two opposite manners. Malherbe and Balzac founded in our literature the learned, polished, chastened, cultivated style; in the composition of which they come from thought to expression, slowly, by degrees, and by dint of tentatives and erasures. This is the style that Boileau advised for all purposes; he would fain have a work returned twenty times to the stocks to be polished and repolished constantly; he boasts of having taught Racine to write easy verses in a difficult manner. Racine is, in fact, the most perfect specimen of this style in poesy; Fléchier was less successful in his prose. But by the side of this style of writing, always somewhat uniform and academic, there is another, widely different, free, capricious, variable, without traditional method, and wholly conformed to diversities of talent and genius. Montaigne and Regnier gave admirable samples of it, and Queen Marguerite a most charming one in her familiar memoirs, the work of her *après-disnées*. This is the broad, untrammelled, abundant style that follows the current of ideas; the style of the first thought, the *prime-sautier*, as Montaigne himself would say;

it is that of La Fontaine and Molière, that of Fénelon, of Bossuet, of the Duc de Saint-Simon, and of Mme. de Sévigné. The latter excels in it; she lets her pen 'trot with the reins on its neck,' and, as it goes along, she scatters in profusion colors, comparisons, images, while wit and sentiment escape her on all sides. She is thus placed, without intending or suspecting it, in the front rank of the writers of our language."

—C. A. SAINTE-BEUVE: *Portraits of the Seventeenth Century*.

Translated by K. P. Wormeley.

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b. Name any writers you know who seem to belong to the class first described by Sainte-Beuve; to the second class.

4. Is the presentation in the following passage self-explanatory or is the interpretative passage, "From the book . . . naïve and fundamental," necessary to your understanding of the presentation?

"Mr. Richards told of advertising enterprises, of contracts and journeyings, of his great friendship with the late Dr. Parker, of his domestic affairs, and all the changes in the world that had struck him. . . . From the book one got an effect, garrulous perhaps, but on the whole not unpleasing, of an elderly but still active business personality quite satisfied by his achievements and representative of I know not what proportion, but at any rate a considerable proportion, of his fellow-countrymen. And one got an effect of a being not simply indifferent to the health and vigor and growth of the community of which he was a part, but unaware of its existence.

"He displays this irresponsibility of the commercial mind so illuminatingly, because he does in a way attempt to tell

something more than his personal story. He notes the changes in the world about him, how this has improved and that progressed, which contrasts between England and America struck upon his mind. That he himself is responsible amid these changes never seems to dawn upon him. His freedom from any sense of duty to the world as a whole, of any subordination of trading to great ideas, is naïve and fundamental. He tells of how he arranged with the authorities in charge of the Independence Day celebration on Boston Common to display 'three large pieces' containing the name of a certain 'bitters,' which they did, and how this no doubt very desirable commodity was first largely advertised throughout the United States, in the fall of 1861, and rapidly became the success of the day, because of the enormous amount of placarding given to the cabalistic characters 'S-T-1860-X.' Those strange letters and figures stared upon people from wall and fence and tree, in every leading town throughout the United States. They were painted on the rocks of the Hudson River to such an extent that the attention of the legislature was drawn to the fact, and a law was passed to prevent the further disfigurement of river scenery.

"He calls this 'cute.' He tells, too, of his educational work upon the English Press, how he won it over to 'display' advertisements, and devised 'the first sixteen-sheet double-demy poster ever seen in England in connection with a proprietary article.' He introduced the smoking of cigarettes into England against great opposition. Mr. Richards finds no incongruity, but apparently a very delightful association, in the fact that this great victory for the adolescent's cigarette was won on the site of Strudwick's house, wherein John Bunyan died, and hard by the path of the

Smithfield martyrs to their fiery sacrifice. Both they and Mr. Richards 'lit such a candle in England.'

\* \* \* \* \*

"He sat under the late Dr. Parker of the rich and prosperous City Temple, and that reverend gentleman's leonine visage adorns the book. . . . For this gentleman Mr. Richards seems to have entertained a feeling approaching reverence. . . . I find Mr. Richards quoting with approval Dr. Parker's 'Ten General Commandments for Men of Business'—commandments which strike me as not only state-blind, but utterly God-blind, which are, indeed, no more than shrewd counsels 'for getting on.' It is really quite horrible stuff morally. 'Thou shalt not hobnob with idle persons,' parodies Dr. Parker in commandment V, so glossing richly upon the teachings of Him who ate with publicans and sinners, and (no doubt to instill the advisability of keeping one's more delicate business procedure in one's own hands), 'Thou shalt not forget that a servant who can tell lies *for* thee, may some day tell lies *to* thee.' . . .

"I am not throwing any doubt upon the sincerity of Dr. Parker and Mr. Richards. I believe that nothing could exceed the transparent honesty that ends this record which tells of a certain bitters pushed at the sacrifice of beautiful scenery, of a successful propaganda of cigarette-smoking, and of all sorts of proprietary articles landed well home in their gastric target, of a whole life lost, indeed, in commercial self-seeking, with, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?'" — H. G. WELLS: *The Future in America*.

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5. Choose an author who interests you and write a paragraph characterizing his style by close, direct



interpretation. Write a second paragraph in which you illustrate the quality you have discussed by examples accompanied by interpretative comment. Write a third paragraph in which you use a figure to describe the effect of the quality you have ascribed to your author.

6. Write a paragraph of comment on an author's work, to bring out some one idea. Write a paragraph of presentation that without the aid of comment will bring out the same idea.

## CRITICISM OF A STORY

THE reviewer of a story may use the reporter's method, concerning himself little or not at all with any problem about the book and giving his entire attention to showing forth the content of the book and its obvious characteristics, or he may assume the reader's acquaintance with the story and give merely his judgment of it. Again, he may combine judgment and presentation, or he may suppress judgment and present the story in such a way as to imply judgment. If the writer follows the popular arrangement, he will give first some exposition of the content of the story, then, comment on the story and upon the style in which it is written.

When included in the criticism, the telling of the story is usually an important part of the review. There are various ways of doing this effectively. The ordinary newspaper article suggests an excellent way: the headlines give the kernel of the article; they are followed by a brief statement of general facts; this general statement is followed by a detailed account. Thus, one might begin by stating in general terms the theme of the story, as: —

*The Divine Fire* is a novel worked out on Emerson's

theory of the over-soul—a story of triumph through fidelity to the inner vision.

George Eliot's *Romola* shows the slight value of neutral goodness.

Stevenson's *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a tale of the futility of the attempt to lead a double life.

In *What Masie Knew*, Mr. Henry James presents the case of a child who develops a moral conscience in most adverse circumstances.

That freedom from ignoble conditions is not to be gained by running away from them, but by taking up your life in the midst of them and so controlling it that they shall not dominate you,—this was the lesson experience taught Mr. Herrick's intractable hero in *The Web of Life*.

After the key of the story is obtained, the second step is to give it more ample statement:—

*The Divine Fire* is a novel worked out on Emerson's theory of the *over-soul*—a story of the importance of fidelity to the inner light in the life of man. The gentleman-critic with apparently a finely poised and rightly centered life, to whom all good things seem possible, is untrue in spirit to the divine fire, and so loses and falls. The protagonist, on the other hand, notwithstanding his poetic gift, is something of a "bounder," living at cross-purposes in vulgar conditions, until an illuminating experience makes him sensitive to the guidance of the "divine fire"; then,

by following its leading, in spite of counter allurements, and one narrow escape from a serious misstep, his life becomes unified, his power perfected, and he attains real success and the earthly "shows" of it, as well.

George Eliot's *Romola* shows the slight value of neutral goodness by tracing the degeneration of a character of great charm whose tendency to choose the easiest way and avoid pain is at the opening of the story his chief fault.

It is now necessary to provide the characters with a "local habitation and a name," to present something of the narrative. You now have a nucleus about which to build your story. If you are guided by it to select those details germane to the central idea of the story, you will have no difficulty in telling it with brevity and completeness.

An unpracticed writer is apt to fail at the second step—to give the narrative with too much detail, so that his specific narrative must include much that has already been said. It is possible to omit this step altogether, to allow the reader to find for himself how the story works out the theme. But the critic greatly economizes the reader's time and attention by indicating the direction in which the application of the theme is to be looked for. The reader is then able to perceive the development of the theme as he reads the abridged story. As the reviewer

can at best give so little of a complex story, he must needs avail himself of such aid to make the fragment he offers intelligible. This general statement should be given so briefly and abstractly as not to be the story, but rather the framework into which the story fits. The statement of the theme and this guide to its specific development, together, should make no more than a single paragraph.

Regarding the telling of a story, however, as in other matters of criticism, it is impossible to establish any hard and fast rule. The story reviewed must determine the manner of its telling. Manifestly, if the story is one like Aldrich's *Marjorie Daw* or Guy de Maupassant's *Necklace*, whose purpose is to surprise, it would be a mistake to begin a review of it with a statement that would make the issue clear from the start and so render the tale ineffective. Even in those cases, however, where in the telling the clew should be suppressed till the end, the method for the workshop is to discover the motive of the story by which to govern the selection of detail, at the very start.

If the story is one whose plot-interest is found in the incidents of the leading characters' lives — such a story as *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Little Women*, *Cranford*, *The Newcomes*, perhaps the most satisfactory way of reviewing the whole is by the enumeration of salient, suggestive incidents.

Hazlitt gives us an instance of this sort of suggestive recapitulation applied to *The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*. He says:—

“The characters of the club, not only in the *Tatler*, but in the *Spectator*, were drawn by Steele. That of Sir Roger de Coverley is among the number. Addison has, however, gained himself immortal honor by his manner of filling up this last character. Who is there that can forget, or be insensible to, the inimitable nameless graces and varied traits of nature and of old English character in it—to his unpretending virtues and amiable weaknesses—to his modesty, generosity, hospitality, and eccentric whims—to the respect of his neighbors, and the affection of his domestics—to his wayward, hopeless, secret passion for his fair enemy, the widow, in which there is more of real romance and true delicacy than in a thousand tales of knight-errantry—(we perceive the hectic flush of his cheek, the faltering of his tongue in speaking of her bewitching airs and ‘the whiteness of her hand’)—to the havoc he makes among the game in his neighborhood—to his speech from the bench, to show the *Spectator* what is thought of him in the country—to his unwillingness to be put up as a signpost, and his having his own likeness turned into the Saracen’s head—to his gentle reproof of the baggage of a gypsy that tells him ‘he has a widow in his line of life’—to his doubts as to the existence of witchcraft, and protection of reputed witches—to his account of the family pictures, and his choice of a chaplain—to his falling asleep at church, and his reproof of John Williams, as soon as he recovered from his nap, for talking in sermon-time.”

—WILLIAM HAZLITT: *Periodical Essayists*.

Unity and comprehensiveness, while fundamental requirements, are not the only ends to be worked for in telling a story. Not only should the essential details be given, they should be presented in such a manner as to preserve as well as possible the tone and spirit of the story. Any telling of Poe's *Black Cat* that failed to give a sense of horror, *The Brushwood Boy* told with no suggestion of eerie sweetness, would be flat. *Balaustion's Adventure* without its tonic quality, *The Wings of a Dove* without a suggestion of elusiveness, of shadowy things too intangible for articulation — these things are well-nigh more insufferable than Hamlet with Hamlet left out. The success of the summary of a story will depend largely on the power of the writer to get into the spirit of the story and preserve its mystery, its quaintness, its relentless directness, or whatever quality characterizes it. Some story-tellers unconsciously fall more or less into the tone of the narrative they are epitomizing, but when we work, as we should, for brevity and unity, we are in danger of losing this indispensable quality, and must make conscious effort to preserve or secure it. A palpable device that is helpful here is to quote characteristic words or phrases of the original story-teller in repeating his story. "At the boarding-house dinner table arranged with a view to the effect on the passer-by, where the men refused a second serving of 'canary pudding' as if renouncing

happiness, and the women shone in 'hilarious' blouses, the presence of the poet," etc., does more to hint the spirit of the unforgettable London boarding house in May Sinclair's *The Divine Fire* than "at the bourgeois boarding-house table where his fellow-diners showed their ingrained vulgarity in their dress and in the emphasis they placed on what they ate," etc. In the second version there is no hint of the writer's humorous view of the situation.

Presentation accomplished, the critic may give his attention to judicial criticism. It must be understood that criticism does not necessarily follow presentation; it may precede; the story may be told, as in Poe's criticism of Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, with the express purpose of sustaining the critic's comment on the structure of the story. Or the criticism may be called forth as a running comment during the telling of the story. Matthew Arnold's review of *Anna Karénina* is a case in point. The usual place for the comment is, however, after presentation.

The criticism may concern itself with the substance or the manner of the story, may regard the naturalness of the characters, the implied philosophy of the story, the plot-structure, the setting, the diction, — all these topics and many more. But selection is usually necessary; the student-critic must remember the old warning, and let his outline include only those points on which he actually has something to say.



In the following paragraphs on Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, Thackeray omits presentation of the story as unnecessary, declines to discuss objections to the style, and centers his attention on what is to him the valuable quality of the book — its human effect: —

“In fact, one might as well detail the plot of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, or *Robinson Crusoe*, as recapitulate here the adventures of Scrooge, the miser, and his Christmas conversion. I am not sure that the allegory is a very complete one, and protest, with the classics, against the use of blank verse in prose; but here all objections stop. Who can listen to objections regarding such a book as this? It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness. The last two people I heard speak of it were women. Neither knew the other, or the author; and both said by way of criticism, ‘God bless him!’ A Scotch philosopher, who nationally does not keep Christmas Day, on reading the book, sent out for a turkey and asked two friends to dine: this is a fact! Many men were known to sit down after perusing it, and write off letters to their friends, not about business, but out of their fullness of heart, and to wish old acquaintances a happy Christmas. Had the book appeared a fortnight earlier, all the prize cattle would have been gobbled up in pure love and friendship, Epping denuded of sausages, and not a turkey left in Norfolk. His Royal Highness’s fat stock would have fetched unheard-of prices, and Alderman Bannister would have been tired of slaying. But there is a Christmas for 1844, too; the book will be as early then as now, and so let speculators look out.

“As for Tiny Tim, there is a certain passage in the book regarding that young gentleman, about which a man should hardly venture to speak in print or in public, any more than he would of any other affections of his private heart. There is not a reader in England but that little creature will be a bond of union between the author and him; and he will say of Charles Dickens, as the woman just now, ‘GOD BLESS HIM!’ What a feeling is this for a writer to be able to inspire, and what a reward to reap!”

This passage is a mere fragment of criticism, but it will show the student how he may dismiss, without ignoring, points that he does not wish to consider, and fix his attention on what seems to him important.

What was said in the preceding chapter about the necessity of truth and definiteness, the importance of illustration, and the right tone for all literary criticism is, of course, applicable here.

The student will readily see, after a little thought, that what has been said in this chapter about method of presentation, order of judicial criticism with regard to presentation, and the limitation of the critic's comment for the purpose of escaping perfunctoriness, is not confined in its application to the novel. The suggestions may be applied equally well when an essay or a poem is the subject of criticism.

### EXERCISES

I. This exercise assumes an acquaintance with George Eliot's *Silas Marner*.

*a.* Find and state concisely the theme of *Silas Marner*.

*b.* What tone should be preserved in telling the story?

*c.* Make a list of the author's words or phrases which, if used in telling the story, would help to preserve this tone.

*d.* Change and fill out the following outline so that it will indicate what you think ought to be said about *Silas Marner*:—

I. Presentation.

*A.* Theme.

1. Statement of.
2. Amplification of.

*B.* Narrative.

1. Silas's hard fortune.

*a.* First instance.

(1) Its nature: The unjust judgment.

(2) Its effect.

(*a*) On his manner of living.

(*b*) On his character.

(*c*) On his reputation.

*b.* Second instance.

(1) Its nature: The loss of his gold.

(2) Its effect.

(*a*) On him.

(*b*) On the attitude of others  
toward him.

2. Silas's good fortune.
  - a.* First instance: The coming of Eppie.
    - (1) Its occurrence.
    - (2) Its cause.
    - (3) Its effects.
      - (*a*) On Silas.
      - (*b*) On his neighbors.
      - (*c*) On the Squire's household.
  - b.* Second instance: The finding of the gold.
    - (1) Its occurrence.
    - (2) Its revelations.
    - (3) Its effects.

## II. Criticism.

### *A.* Structure of plot.

1. Its unity.
2. Its probability.

### *B.* Setting.

1. Character.
2. How presented.
3. With what effect.

### *C.* Characters.

1. Silas.
  - a.* Elements of his character.
    - (1) Their manifestations.
    - (2) Their development.
  - b.* Effect of character on reader.
2. Eppie, etc.

e. Come to class prepared to tell orally the story of *Silas Marner*, giving first the theme, next, the general expansion of the theme, and finally the detailed narrative.

f. Come to class prepared to give a specific oral criticism of the plot-structure, the setting, and the characters of *Silas Marner*.

2. Choose another novel that you like and study it as you have been directed to study *Silas Marner*. Bring to class a careful and complete outline for your review of the novel, that will help you to remember what you want to say when you are called upon to give an oral review in class.

3. Read a review of a novel; make an outline of the review; write a criticism of it, specifically pointing out its weakness or strength.

4. Give the themes of the stories outlined below : —

“ . . . The leading incident round which the story [*The World Went Very Well Then*] is constructed was, in like manner, found by me. About the end of the seventeenth century there was a certain young lieutenant of the navy who promised a girl at Deptford marriage when he should return from his next cruise. He did return; she reminded him of his promise; he laughed at her. She fell on her knees and prayed solemnly that God Almighty would smite him in that part which he should feel the most. He was then appointed captain of a ship. He took her into action, having the reputation of a brave and gallant officer. He was seized with sudden cowardice, and struck the flag at the

first shot. That was my material for the story, and very good material it was."

— SIR WALTER BESANT: *Autobiography*.

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"And here it is that Mr. Warner proves at once his insight into life, and his newly acquired skill as a story-teller; he makes us see and understand, and even accept as inevitable, the slow process of deterioration which follows on the mating of a young woman of lofty standards with a dominating character of coarser and tougher substance. The disintegration of Margaret's moral fiber under the repeated shocks of worldliness, incessantly recurring, until at last the strain breaks down all resistance, seems to me one of the finest things in recent American literature.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of all the many attempts to represent in fiction the American money-maker, the man who has amassed an immense fortune, and who goes on increasing it with no thought of resting from his labor, the man who exists solely for the sake of making money, surrendering all tastes that interfere with this passion, giving up everything else, abandoning his whole life to gain, and not from any sordid avarice, not even from any great desire to use what he accumulates, but moved mainly by an interest in the sport of speculation, and finding the zest of his life in the game of money-making, wholly regardless of the cash value of the stakes — of all the many efforts to put such a man before us in the pages of a novel, this study of Mr. Warner's seems to me to be the most successful. Henderson is vigorously presented, and we get to know him and to understand how it is that he is not unkindly, and that he is absolutely unscrupulous. We perceive why he has no malice toward those he injured by his scheming, and

why he bears them no ill will even after he has ruined them. We see how all the better impulses of the man have been starved and choked by the growth of the one all-absorbing passion ; and it is not without pity that we discover that not only his impulses, but his tastes, his minor interests in life, his faculty of enjoyment, have been eliminated, one by one, until at last he has nothing left but the one thing on which he has set his heart, and to which he has bent his whole being. Then at length even this one thing loses its savor, and is as dust and ashes in his mouth. At the very acme and climax of his triumph Henderson knows that his life has been a failure."

— BRANDER MATTHEWS : *Aspects of Fiction and Other Ventures in Criticism.*

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5. Select one of the following themes, and, in not more than ten lines, tell how it might be developed in a story : —

"Among my shorter stories *Katherine Regina*, the most successful, shows the misery of being left destitute without special training or knowledge. *The Inner House* is an allegory in which it is shown that everything worth having in life depends upon death, the appointed end. . . . *In Deacon's Orders* is a study in religiosity which is an emotion quite apart from religion. . . . *The Master Craftsman* is the history of a politician who makes himself by the aid of an ambitious woman. *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice* is a tale of the evil influence of the inheritance of great wealth. Of course, such a theme easily brings to the stage a number of people of all kinds and conditions. The prospect of wealth corrupts and demoralizes every one — the man of science,

the man of pleasure, the colonial, the actor, the American. *The Fourth Generation* is the most serious of all my novels. Here we have to deal with the truth that the children do undoubtedly suffer for the sins of the fathers."

— SIR WALTER BESANT: *Autobiography*.

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6. Discuss the meaning, the purpose, and the method of each of the following paragraphs of criticism:—

(a) "In the characters themselves [in *The House of the Seven Gables*] this local realism is carried to the highest degree of truth, especially in Hepzibah, who in her half-vital state, with her faded gentility and gentle, heroic heart of patient love, in all her outer queerness and grotesquely thwarted life, is the most wholly alive of all of Hawthorne's characters; in Phoebe, too, though in a different way, is the same truth a life entirely real. . . . There remains Judge Pyncheon, on whom Hawthorne evidently exhausted his skill in the effort to make him repellent. He is studied after the gentleman who was most active in the removal of Hawthorne from the Custom House, and was intended to be a recognizable portrait of him. . . . But taken without reference to the original, Judge Pyncheon is somewhat of a stage villain, a puppet; his villainy is presented mainly in his physique, his dress and walk, his smile and scowl, and generally his demeanor; it is not actively shown. . . . He is the bogey of the house, the Pyncheon type incarnated in each generation, and when he sits dead in the old chair, he seems less an individual than the Pyncheon corpse. In the long chapter which serves as his requiem, and in which there is the suggestion of Dickens not in the best phase of his art,



the jubilation is somewhat diabolic; it affects one as if Hawthorne's thoughts were executing a dance upon a grave. The character is too plainly hated by the author, and it fails to carry conviction of its veracity, yet in certain external touches and aspects it suggests the hypocrite who everywhere walks the streets, placid, respectable, sympathetic in salutations, but bearing within a cold, gross, cruel, sensual, and selfish nature, which causes a shudder at every casual glimpse that betrays its lurking hideousness. The character is thoroughly conceived, but, being developed by description instead of action, seems overdone."

— GEORGE E. WOODBERRY: *Nathaniel Hawthorne*.

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(b) "It [Hawthorne's picture of New England life in *The House of the Seven Gables*] appeals, like life and memory themselves, to the people of that countryside, and goes to their hearts like the sight of home."

— GEORGE E. WOODBERRY: *Nathaniel Hawthorne*.

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(c) "The background, also, as in the early tales, is of the slightest [in *The Scarlet Letter*], no more than will suffice for the acting of the drama as a stage setting sympathetic with the central scene, — a town, with a prison, a meeting-house, a pillory, a governor's house, other habitations on a street, a lonely cottage by the shore, the forest round about all; and for occasion and accessories, only a woman's sentence, the incidental death of Winthrop unmarked in itself, a buccaneering ship in the harbor, Indians, Spanish sailors, rough matrons, clergy; this will serve, for such was Hawthorne's fine economy, knowing that this story was one in which every materialistic element must be used at its lowest tone. Though the scene lay in this world, it was but tran-

sitory scaffolding ; the drama was one of the eternal life."

— GEORGE E. WOODBERRY : *Nathaniel Hawthorne*.

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(*d*) "It is the flowery month of May ; the scent of the hawthorn is in the air, and the tender flush of the new spring suffuses the Park, where the tide of fashion and pleasure and idleness surges up and down. The sauntering throng, the splendid equipages, the endless cavalcade in Rotten Row, in which Clive descries afar off the white plume of his lady-love dancing on the waves of an unattainable society ; the club windows are all occupied ; Parliament is in session, with its nightly echoes of imperial politics ; the thronged streets roar with life from morn till nearly morn again ; the drawing-rooms hum and sparkle in the crush of a London season ; as you walk the midnight pavement, through the swinging doors of the cider-cellar comes the burst of bacchanalian song. Here is the world of the press and of letters ; here are institutions, an army, a navy, commerce, glimpses of great ships going to and fro on distant seas, of India, of Australia. This one book [*The Newcomes*] is an epitome of English life, almost of the empire itself. We are conscious of all this, so much breadth and atmosphere has the artist given his little history of half a dozen people in this struggling world."

— CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER : *The Relation of Literature to Life*.

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7. In what respect does Lowell's treatment of Dante's great poem, in the following passages, correspond with the method recommended in the foregoing pages for the presentation of narrative?

“Let us consider briefly what was the plan of the *Divina Commedia* and Dante’s aim in writing it, which, if not to justify, was at least to illustrate, for warning and example, the ways of God to man. The higher intention of the poem was to set forth the results of sin, or unwisdom, and of virtue, or wisdom, in this life, and consequently in the life to come, which is but the continuation and fulfillment of this. The scene, accordingly, is the spiritual world, of which we are as truly denizens now as hereafter. The poem is a diary of the human soul in its journey upward from error through repentance to atonement with God. To make it apprehensible by those whom it was meant to teach, nay, from its very nature as a poem, and not as a treatise of abstract morality, it must act forth everything by means of sensible types and images.

“‘To speak thus is adapted to your mind,  
 Since only through the senses it apprehendeth  
 What then it worthy makes of intellect.’ — *Paradiso*.

“The Poem consists of three parts — Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Each part is divided into thirty-three cantos, in allusion to the years of the Savior’s life; for though the Hell contains thirty-four, the first canto is merely introductory. In the form of the verse (triple rhyme) we may find an emblem of the Trinity, and in the three divisions, of the threefold state of man — sin, grace, and beatitude. Symbolic meanings reveal themselves, or make themselves suspected, everywhere, as in the architecture of the Middle Ages.

\* \* \* \* \*

“As the Gothic cathedral, then, is the type of the Christian idea, so is it also of Dante’s poem. And as that in its artistic unity is but the completed thought of a single architect, which yet could never have been realized except

out of the faith and by the contributions of an entire people, whose beliefs and superstitions, whose imagination and fancy, find expression in its statues and its carvings, its calm saints and martyrs now at rest forever in the seclusion of their canopied niches, and its wanton grotesques thrusting themselves forth from every pinnacle and gargoyle, so in Dante's poem, while it is as personal and peculiar as if it were his private journal and autobiography, we can yet read the diary and the autobiography of the thirteenth century and of the Italian people. Complete and harmonious in design as his work is, it is yet no Pagan temple enshrining a type of the human made divine by triumph of corporeal beauty; it is not a private chapel housing a single saint and dedicate to one chosen bloom of Christian piety or devotion; it is truly a cathedral, over whose high altar hangs the emblem of suffering, of the divine made human to teach the beauty of adversity, the eternal presence of the spiritual, not overhanging and threatening, but informing and sustaining the material. In this cathedral of Dante's there are side-chapels, as is fit, with altars to all Christian virtues and perfections; but the great impression of its leading thought is that of aspiration, forever and ever. In the three divisions of the poem we may trace something more than a fancied analogy with a Christian basilica. There is first the ethnic forecourt, then the purgatorial middle space, and last the holy of holies dedicated to the eternal presence of the mediatorial God."

— JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL: *Dante*.

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## CRITICISM OF AN AUTHOR OR OF SEVERAL OF HIS WORKS

THE review of a collection of stories or essays is a more complicated undertaking than the review of a single piece of work. Such a review may have the unity that comes from developing a number of cognate subjects with the same spirit and intensity. One might write upon the topics, the plots, the themes, the characters, the setting, the style, of a collection of stories and develop the topics by generalization and illustration; or if a collection of essays is the subject of criticism, the range of subjects, the themes, the spirit, structural characteristics and peculiarities, and diction, might be the topics for the several paragraphs.

Again it is possible to take some one theme and make that the unifying basis of a review embracing separate pieces of work. Mr. Charles Miner Thompson in a paper on the short stories of Alice Brown in *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1906, endeavors to show that Miss Brown does not use her power to the best advantage because of her failure to recognize her field. He first derives from her work her theory of story-writing, expounds it, and shows it to be sound. Then

he considers her practice, and by presentation and interpretation shows that she does not always realize her ideal because of her overvaluation of a limited philosophy and because of her labored phrase-making in her preferred but uncongenial field of expression. Having pointed out her shortcomings and their cause, he then shows her freedom from these faults, her felicity in phrasing, her truth, when dealing with congenial subject-matter, her native New England, and gives general reasons why she should prize and cultivate this field rather than the one she evidently prefers.

When you have no theory of your own to expound concerning a series of stories or essays, you will often find a unifying idea upon which to base your criticism, ready made to your hand. Take, for example, Stevenson's *Memories and Portraits*: In the introductory note the author suggests that, taken together, the papers build up a face that " 'I have loved long since and lost a while,' the face of what was once myself." To show the Stevenson at different periods of his youth as built up directly and by indirection from these pages, is to give a good idea of the content and character of the book. Arnold's definition of criticism, as set down in *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, the leading essay of the *First Series of Essays in Criticism*, offers a good unit of measurement for the other essays in the collection.

Closely related to the criticism of a collection of a writer's works is the criticism that consists in a presentation and judgment of the author.

This differs from other biographical exposition, mainly in the source from which the material is taken. In all biographical exposition the critic's aim is the same—to get at the personality of the inventor, the soldier, the artist, the author; wherever that personality has expressed itself most freely and significantly, the critic must look for the most revealing material. It is the free and significant expression of that personality, that has stamped the man soldier, artist, author. It is therefore to his particular field of work that the critic must usually look for the most convincing manifestation of his personality. In short, the tree is known by its fruit. The critic whose subject is a man of letters must then depend mainly on the writer's books to get at what really counts in the man's life and character. But other roads to discovery should not be disregarded: the impression drawn from the author's books ought to be strengthened or corrected by his manifestations in other directions.

To write an appreciation of an author, then, knowledge of his writings is of primary importance, but that knowledge should be supplemented by knowledge of his life. This knowledge of the author's life may enter into the critic's sketch little or not at

all; to give it a leading or even an important place would be in most cases a mistake — a mistake in proportion, by giving too much emphasis to evidence of secondary importance.

Walter Pater in his *Appreciation of Charles Lamb* has given us an admirably unified and proportioned piece of criticism. He presents Lamb as a "sort of visible interpretation and instance" of Humor as distinct from Wit—not the "unreal and transitory mirth, which is as the crackling of thorns under the pot," but the "laughter which blends with tears and even with the sublimities of the imagination, and which in its most exquisite motives, is one with pity." He touches gently the life of Lamb and shows these contradictory elements present there, the deep tragedy under the "blithe surface." Most of the essay is taken up, however, with showing how the literary work of Lamb, both in substance and manner, is the embodiment of humor in the sense in which he has defined it.

In his life of Pater, Mr. A. C. Benson says that in this essay, although Pater "puts aside certain broad aspects of Lamb's character as being less congenial to himself," one feels that he "has seen the innermost heart of the man with the insight that only affection can give, an insight which subtler and harder critics seem to miss, even though the picture they draw is incontestably truer in detail."



Truth in spirit is the indispensable truth, but the untried critic cannot hope to get it in spite of false detail. Truth both in spirit and detail is the only safe standard for him. He must resist the temptation to write a clever or startling critique by working up some far-fetched or freakish fancy about an author, to which facts may be made to lend a certain plausibility. He must seek to know his author, to read him, and to read about him till he has an opinion regarding him that he feels to be true and well grounded. To give voice to his own "sense of fact" and to win his reader's consenting "that's so," are higher as well as safer aims than to be novel, or unique, or original in any sense that is not the result of fidelity to his own impression.

The critic must first know what his impression of an author is ; having formed a distinct impression of that personality and defined it to his own satisfaction, he must see that it has a sufficient basis. When he has selected whatever in the life, the books, or the comment of others, is most responsible for his impression, he is ready to arrange his material in an effective outline for a critical essay.

The preparation for such a paper as the one now under consideration is the most important part of the work. The reading must be judiciously done. In most cases it is impossible for a student to read all of a writer's works thoroughly ; he should, how-

ever, read his author as nearly "whole" as possible. He should first glance through indexes and introductions to all of the author's books, to see the character and scope of his work. Next, he should read rapidly as many as he can, summarizing each in his notebook when he has finished reading it. He should then re-read carefully those works which have seemed to him most significant, analyze them to verify his first impression, and outline them with more or less detail, as the seriousness of the work demands.

While reading, it is well to take brief notes, with careful references to books and pages. These notes should be taken on "slip sheets," and afterward classified in the notebook under some general headings, such as intellectual characteristics, emotional characteristics, æsthetic characteristics, and so on. Quotations are valuable if rightly used, but to quote an isolated passage as proof of a belief or tendency in a writer, is inconclusive and unconvincing, unless reënforced with other evidence. Detail should not escape the reader, but at the same time he must have an eye on larger things,—on the author's tendencies, tastes, method of thought. What does he know? What are his interests? Has he a philosophy? What is it? Does his intellectual force lie in his fine, keen perceptivity, or has he a logical mind? Does he systematize knowledge? Is he more artist or philosopher? Does he draw inferences and expound theories?

Is he dogmatic or suggestive? Is he cautious or unguarded? Does he present or does he interpret? Is he an optimist? Is he a pessimist, or does life, sad or gay, engage his attention impartially? Does his subject influence his mood, or does his mood influence his treatment of his subject? What does he like? What does he dislike? When is he humorous? Does he make you think? Does he arouse your emotions? What ideas does he revert to? To answer such questions as these — not merely to cull striking extracts — the critic reads and takes notes.

When the student feels that he knows his author, as revealed through his writings, he should go to his biography for further light on his personality. All books are not equally valuable here. The biographical dictionary account, with its bare record of facts, furnishes too slight a basis for inference. Journals, letters, autobiographies, are usually rich in suggestive material. Full biographies are, of course, better than interpretative biographical sketches for one who is not looking for conclusions, but for the facts upon which to base conclusions.

The student should select from the biography such material as he sees to have some relation to the development of the author's personality, and he should, in using it, so present it as to make that relation evident. In writing an appreciation of Addison, a student is not justified in writing about the condition

of society at the time in which he lived, simply because it is possible for him to make a picturesque paragraph on that topic; if, however, he can show the bearing of the life of the times on the writings of Addison, he is fully justified in choosing this material. Unless he sees that it had some possible effect on Ruskin, the writer, why should the would-be critic mention, in a brief appreciation of Ruskin, the fact that in childhood he was required to learn long passages from the Bible? On the other hand, it is important not to omit what may be necessary to an understanding of the acts and words of a writer. Pater needed to speak of the tragedy in Lamb's life; not because it was startling and sensational, but because it explained much. De Quincey's opium habit should be mentioned in an interpretative sketch of that writer, not because it is something morbid and abnormal, but, again, because it explains much—because of what it manifests and what it gives rise to.

The child is often father to the man, and the early years of a man's life are, indeed, significant; but they are not, as the student too often seems to suppose, the only significant years. He may seek to excuse himself for the omission of all mention of events of maturity, on the ground that, since he considers the personality of the writer as shown through his books, he is not slighting the later years of the writer's life. As I have said, it is right to make the personality, as

manifested in his books, the chief concern of such a paper. But such events as are given from the life should be selected because of their significance. There should not be the crude disproportion of the trivial incidents of childhood given in full, while eloquent events of manhood are ignored.

When the student has formed his own opinions, he may read criticisms and find out what others have thought and written about his author. Here he must be careful to preserve his intellectual independence and honesty. He must think for himself; hold his own opinions where he has reason to believe he is right, modify them where he is made to see that he has been wrong, adopt as his own no opinion that he does not understand and see to be true, and borrow no words or phrases or ideas without giving credit to the one from whom he takes them.

In studying an author we read his books first, his life next, and the opinions of critics last. In writing we usually depart from this order, showing first how the writer's personality was fostered and expressed in his life, then, how it was expressed in his books, and, finally, how it was regarded by those who knew him either through his life or writings. This order is, however, not inevitable.

It is more possible than might at first be supposed for a wide-awake student to get the knowledge needed for such a piece of criticism, to immerse him-

self as nearly as possible in his subject for a short time with surprisingly satisfactory results. But where it seems impracticable for students to attempt a complete appreciation, they may find it quite possible to employ the methods just considered in studying and writing upon some particular phase of an author's personality. Thus with an acquaintance with the *Essays of Elia* only, a student might undertake to justify the saying that Lamb was "not the most-loved but the best-loved of English essayists," showing how he makes a strong appeal to the discriminating. He might discuss Ruskin's works in so far as they pertain to his doctrine—"Life without labor is guilt; labor without art is brutality." The optimism of Stevenson, the cynicism of Thackeray, the patriotism of Meredith, are subjects that call for study of biography and writings. Such studies as these, while less satisfying than the final literary appreciation, have the advantage of being less ambitious. The student need make no attempt to estimate the importance of the phase discussed—it may or may not be a controlling element in the author's personality; the student's business is merely to make clear its nature and show how it is manifest.

In the preface to *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, Robert Louis Stevenson presents in a helpful way the difficulties that beset the writer of biographical sketches. He says:—

“The writer of short studies, having to condense in a few pages the events of a whole lifetime, and the effect on his own mind of many volumes, is bound, above all things, to make that condensation logical and striking. For the only justification of his writing at all is that he shall present a brief, seasoned, and memorable view. By the necessity of the case, all the more neutral circumstances are omitted from his narrative ; and that of itself, by the negative exaggeration of which I have spoken in the text, lends to the matter in hand a certain false and specious glitter. By the necessity of the case, again, he is forced to view his subject throughout in a particular illumination, like a studio artifice. Like Hales with Pepys, he must nearly break his sitter’s neck to get the proper shadows on the portrait. It is from one side only that he has time to represent his subject. The side selected will either be the one most striking to himself, or the one most obscured by controversy ; and in both cases that will be the one most liable to strained and sophisticated reading. In a biography this and that is displayed ; the hero is seen at home, playing the flute ; the different tendencies of his work come, one after another, into notice ; and thus something like a true, general impression of the subject may at last be struck. But in the short study, the writer, having seized his ‘point of view,’ must keep his eye steadily to that. He seeks, perhaps, rather to differentiate, than truly to characterize. The proportion of the sitter must be sacrificed to the proportions of the portrait ; the lights are heightened, the shadows overcharged ; the chosen expression, continually forced, may degenerate at length into a grimace ; and we have at best something of a caricature, at worst a calumny. Hence, if they be readable at all, the peculiar convincing force of these brief repre-

sentations. They take so little a while to read, and yet in that little while the subject is so repeatedly introduced in the same light, with the same expression, that by sheer force of repetition, that view is imposed upon the reader. The two English masters of the style, Macaulay and Carlyle, largely exemplify its dangers. Carlyle, indeed, had so much more depth and knowledge of the heart, his portraits of mankind are felt and rendered with so much more poetic comprehension, and he, like his favorite Ram Dass, had a fire in his belly so much more hotly burning than the patent reading lamp by which Macaulay studied, that it seems at first sight hardly fair to bracket them together. But the 'point of view' was imposed by Carlyle on the men he judged of in his writings with an austerity not only cruel, but almost stupid. They are too often broken outright on the Procrustean bed; the rhetorical artifice of Macaulay is easily spied; it will take longer to appreciate the moral bias of Carlyle. So with all writers who insist on forcing some significance from all that comes before them; and the writer of short studies is bound, by the necessity of the case, to write entirely in that spirit. What he cannot vivify he should omit."

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

The numberless opportunities for comparing and contrasting authors and their works, widen the horizon of literary criticism. Indeed, the possibilities in this field of writing are almost limitless, but the student who is able to do well the types of criticism already considered has a firm basis upon which to build more complex forms of criticism.



## EXERCISES

1. This exercise assumes an acquaintance with the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*:—

*a.* Read the fourth of the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* (*Spectator* No. 34) and find the object of this series of papers. State it.

*b.* Amplify your statement in a general way, telling what Addison and Steele did not seek to do, and showing how they differed in their attitude toward human imperfections from more rigorous reformers, such as Carlyle; take the following paragraph from Macaulay on the philosophy of Sir Francis Bacon as a model for treatment. (Your paragraph might begin, "To make men heroes was not the purpose of the writers of the *De Coverley Papers*.")

"To make men perfect was no part of Bacon's plan. His humble aim was to make imperfect men comfortable. The beneficence of his philosophy resembled the beneficence of the common Father, whose sun rises on the evil and on the good, whose rain descends for the just and the unjust. In Plato's opinion man was made for philosophy; in Bacon's opinion philosophy was made for man; it was a means to an end; and that end was to increase the pleasures and to mitigate the pains of millions who are not and cannot be philosophers. That a valetudinarian who took great pleasure in being wheeled along his terrace, who relished his boiled chicken and his weak wine and water, and who enjoyed a hearty laugh over the Queen of Navarre's tales, should be treated as a *caput lupinum* because he could not

read the *Timæus* without a headache, was a notion which the humane spirit of the English school of wisdom altogether rejected. Bacon would not have thought it beneath the dignity of a philosopher to contrive an improved garden chair for such a valetudinarian, to devise some way of rendering his medicines more palatable, to invent repasts which he might enjoy, and pillows on which he might sleep soundly; and this, though there might not be the smallest hope that the mind of the poor invalid would ever rise to the contemplation of the ideal beautiful and the ideal good."

—LORD MACAULAY: *Lord Bacon*.

c. Give a specific account of the content of the papers of the series by recapitulating with suggestive comment, the foibles considered, somewhat in the manner of Hazlitt in the paragraph quoted in a foregoing chapter.

d. In the following paragraph Macaulay treats of the resourcefulness and variety of Addison. He develops his theme first, by assertion; secondly, by figure; thirdly, by striking instances. Follow the same plan in developing a paragraph on the theme: the criticism in the *De Coverley Papers* is always kindly in spirit.

"His best essays approach near to absolute perfection; nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. His invention never seems to flag; nor is he ever under the necessity of repeating himself, or of wearing out a subject. There are no dregs in his wine. He regales us after the fashion of that prodigal nabob who held that there was only one good glass in a bottle. As soon as we have tasted the

first sparkling foam of a jest, it is withdrawn, and a fresh draught of nectar is at our lips. On the Monday we have an allegory as lively and ingenious as Lucian's *Auction of Lives*; on the Tuesday an Eastern apologue, as richly colored as the tales of Scheherazade; on the Wednesday, a character described with the skill of La Bruyère; on the Thursday, a scene from common life, equal to the best chapters in the *Vicar of Wakefield*; on the Friday, some sly Horatian pleasantry on fashionable follies, on hoops, patches, or puppet shows; and on the Saturday a religious meditation, which will bear a comparison with the finest passages in Massillon."

— LORD MACAULAY : *Life and Writings of Addison*.

e. Write a paragraph on the effect of the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* on the reader, taking yourself as a typical reader and basing your comment on your own experience in reading the papers.

2. If the following paragraph is true, what proportion should exist between the manifestation of personality through the written work and through the deeds and sayings of the man, in an appreciation of Samuel Johnson? Why?

"But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking,

puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man."

— LORD MACAULAY: *Samuel Johnson*.

3. Use the following two passages as models in respect to purpose and method for two paragraphs of original criticism:—

"We have inherited traits of the savage, we delight in crimson and sounding brass, in soldiers and gypsies, nor can we conceal, if we would, another and nearer ancestry, 'The child is father to the man': the laws of childhood govern us still, and it is to this common nature of Child and Man that Scott appeals so strongly.

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!  
To all the sensual world proclaim,  
One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name.'

Scott was a master of the domain of simple theatrical drama. What is there more effective than his bravado scenes, which we watch with that secret sympathy for bragging with which we used to watch the big boys at school, for we know that the biggest words will be seconded by deeds. 'Touch Ralph de Vipont's shield—touch the Hospitaller's shield; he is your cheapest bargain.' 'Who has dared,' said Richard, laying his hands upon the Austrian standard, 'who

has dared to place this paltry rag beside the banner of England ?' 'Die, bloodthirsty dog !' said Balfour, 'die as thou hast lived ! die, like the beasts that perish — hoping nothing — believing nothing' — 'And fearing nothing !' said Bothwell.' These and a hundred such passages are very simple, but simple with a simplicity not easy to attain ; they touch the young barbarian in us to the quick."

— HENRY DWIGHT SEDGWICK, JR. : *Essays on Great Writers*.

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"Nowhere in English prose is there such inexpressible beauty of description. Ever modulating and changing as the theme grows gay or sad, it plays over the whole like music. Song and accompaniment are not more closely welded. And with this sense of sound, you never lose a sense of acute vision. You see not only the great moor through recurrent seasons, but cottages, thresholds, angles of chimneys, the pools, those bonfires illumining many hilltops above the dark basin of heath, till the heathmen seem to be standing 'in some radiant upper story of the world.' And the heath at night ! 'Then it became the home of strange phantoms ; and was found to be the hitherto unrecognized original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream, till revived by scenes like this.' The whole first chapter is like the opening *adagio* of a great symphony. Read this passage at midday in a landscape of vernal efflorescence, and the still relentless gloom of Egdon will darken your very soul. How to accomplish this is Mr. Hardy's secret. *The Return of the Native* is too close-knit for the stitch to reveal itself. Read and reread it, each time you are so swept along that you fail to pause and scrutinize the method. You are pos-

sessed by its beauty and sadness ; you lose all wish to know through what mechanism such effects are produced."

—MARY MOSS: *The Novels of Thomas Hardy*.

4. Read the following characterizations, and from them derive a theme for an appreciation of Byron, Wordsworth, Stevenson. State the theme for each and suggest methods for its development.

(a) "Such was Byron's personality, by which 'he is different from all the rest of English poets, and in the main greater.' But he posed all his life, says M. Scherer. Let us distinguish. There is the Byron who posed, there is the Byron with his affectations and silliness, the Byron whose weakness Lady Blessington, with a woman's acuteness, so admirably seized: 'His great defect is flippancy and a total want of self-possession.' But when this theatrical and easily criticised personage betook himself to poetry, and when he had fairly warmed to his work, then he became another man; then the theatrical personage passed away; then a higher power took possession of him and filled him; then at last came forth into light that true and puissant personality, with its direct strokes, its ever-welling force, its satire, its energy, and its agony. This is the real Byron; whoever stops at the theatrical preludings does not know him. And this real Byron may well be superior to the stricken Leopardi; he may well be declared 'different from all the rest of English poets and in the main greater'; in so far as it is true of him, as M. Taine well says, that 'all other souls, in comparison with his, seem inert'; in so far as it is true of him that with superb, exhaustless energy he maintained, as Professor Nichol well says, 'the struggle that keeps alive, if it does not save, the soul'; in so far, finally, as he deserves (and he does deserve)

the noble praise of him which I have already quoted from Mr. Swinburne ; the praise for ‘ the splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offenses and outweighs all his defects : *the excellence of sincerity and strength.*’

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“Even of his passionate admirers, how many never get beyond the theatrical Byron, from whom they caught the fashion of deranging their hair, or of knotting their neck-handkerchief, or of leaving their shirt-collar unbuttoned ; how few profoundly felt his vital influence, the influence of his splendid and imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength.” — MATTHEW ARNOLD : *Byron*.

(b) “It [Wordsworth’s superiority] is in the power with which Wordsworth feels the resources of joy offered to us in nature, offered to us in the primary human affections and duties, and in the power with which, in his moments of inspiration he renders this joy, and makes us, too, feel it ; a force greater than himself seeming to lift him and to prompt his tongue, so that he speaks in a style far above any style of which he has the constant command, and with a truth far beyond any philosophic truth of which he has the conscious and assured possession. . . .

“Wordsworth’s value is of another kind. Wordsworth has an insight into permanent sources of joy and consolation for mankind which Byron has not ; his poetry gives us more that we may rest upon than Byron’s — more which we can rest upon now, and which men may rest upon always.”

— MATTHEW ARNOLD : *Byron*.

(c) “In Stevenson’s implicit philosophy a formulated attitude would be too much like attitudinizing ; too self-conscious and put on ; too much sicklied o’er with the uneasy intro-

spectiveness of the tired century. Enough of posing and irresolution outside the arena of life ; such we may be sure was his thought as he listened to the utterances that came surging up to him from the inner heart of his time. And so what he represents first and wholesomest of all, what most gives him power on his age, is the robust reaction against all this, which breathes like an ozone through every page of his writings. Not that this reaction is overt, or that he takes it upon himself to set up a protest. One great element of his power, on the contrary, is the entire absence of remonstrance, or of anything merely negative or repressive. He simply ignores that benumbing *arrière pensée*, which for full half a century has so beset the faith of the world, and dares to take life at its positive intrinsic value, without the disquiet of morbid analysis. That is all ; his 'attitude' is merely the free, joyous erectness of the undismayed soul.

\* \* \* \* \*

"He had not to think of self, but to be ; not to cipher out an attitude to life, but to live ; not even to appoint himself a missionary of the doctrine of happiness to other men, like those actors who posture and snigger in order to raise a laugh, but simply to be happy and make that happiness, with its solid glow of heat, its own excuse for being. Such happiness is contagious ; it needs no bolstering of propaganda : it awakens echoes ; it calls out responsive cheer by its mere self-evidencing wholesomeness.

"This happiness in Stevenson was more than temperamental ; it had based itself in the wise and penetrative spirit. Nor was it any shallow evasion of the deeps of life ; it was at polar remove from the mere physical well-being of a gourmand, or the glee of an empty-headed dancer. It



had made itself good against too much ill health for that ; and underlying it were centuries of digested thought and doctrine. An efflorescence, a fruitage it truly was, culminating from profound strains of vital meditation. . . .

"To quote passages that give inculcation and definition to this would be little representative, either as to bulk or as to wording, of its vital importance in Stevenson's body of thought ; to quote passages wherein this is the atmosphere and presupposition, making itself felt as a pulsation, a flavor, a tonic, beyond the crudeness of words, would be to quote well-nigh all that he ever wrote. There is a sacredness about it, a holiness as cherished ideal and due, which makes it more fitly a subject of prayer than of dissertation. You remember that striking prayer of his verse, entitled *The Celestial Surgeon*; one cannot help thinking the whole current of Stevenson's aspiration flowed through that:—

"If I have faltered more or less  
 In my great task of happiness;  
 If I have moved among my race  
 And shown no glorious morning face;  
 If beams from happy human eyes  
 Have moved me not ; if morning skies,  
 Books, and my food, and summer rain  
 Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—  
 Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take  
 And stab my spirit broad awake ;  
 Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,  
 Choose thou, before that spirit die,  
 A piercing pain, a killing sin,  
 And to my dead heart run them in !"

—JOHN F. GENUNG, *Stevenson's Attitude to Life*.

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5. Write an "appreciation" of your favorite author.



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